SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

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With Nine Illustrations from Pictures by the Master

"Invention is one of the greatest marks of genius; but if we consult experience, we shall find that it is by being conversant with the inventions of others that we learn to invent; or by reading the thoughts of others we learn to think."—*Sixth Discourse.*

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1894

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE following are some of the chief authorities which have been consulted and utilised in connection with the present volume :—

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Farington's "Life of Reynolds."

Foster's "Life and Times of Oliver Goldsmith."

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"The Beginnings of the Royal Academy," by H. V. Barnett (Magazine of Art).

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October, 1893. C. P.

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Sir Joshua Reynolds

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CHAPTER I

Birth — Parentage — Samuel Reynolds — Joshua's Education — Richardson's Treatise on Painting—Apprenticeship to Hudson—Meeting with Pope —Abrupt Dismissal by Hudson—Return to Devonshire—Is again in London, and recalled Home by Death of his Father—Influence on his Style of Gandy of Exeter—Introduction to Commodore Keppel, and Expedition with him to the Mediterranean—Lands at Minorca—Paints Portraits there—Meets with an Accident—Arrives at Rome—Letter to Lord Edgcumbe—Mode and Direction of Study during Two Years' Residence there—Makes some stay at Florence—Visits Bologna, Modena, Parma, Mantua, Ferrara and Venice—Venetian Notes—Returns to England through France—Low Estimate of Contemporary French Art.

In that admirable and practically exhaustive biography of the *Life and Times of Sir Joshua Reynolds* commenced by Charles Robert Leslie, R.A., and concluded by Tom Taylor, particular stress is laid on the fact that their hero was, like many other men of high distinction, on every side connected with the church—his father and grandfather being clergymen, his mother and her mother the daughters of clergymen, and two of his father's brothers being in holy orders. The fact certainly has its significance, and should be borne in mind in considering the social and literary, rather than the purely artistic, phases of the master's great and perfectly rounded career. More

especially is it important as explaining the ease with which after a short apprenticeship, he took his place in the most polished and cultivated society of the time, and the leaning, in his social relations, rather towards politics, literature and the stage than towards art proper. Some few who could otherwise find little to cavil at in the brilliant, evenly-sustained, and flawless career of the first President of the Royal Academy, have expressed surprise that while he befriended his fellow-artists with a kindness as discerning as it was unfailing, he consorted but little with them, if we except Allan Ramsay the Scotchman and Benjamin West the Pennsylvanian, both of them Court favourites and personages of some social importance. It is from this point of view then that Sir Joshua's birth and early surroundings should be underlined by the biographer, and contrasted with those of Hogarth, Romney, Opie, Northcote, Barry, and many another painter of the early prime of the English art. Against these names, and the inferences to be drawn from them, must, however, in fairness, be set that of Sir Thomas Lawrence, who, although the son of an innkeeper of Devizes, achieved, in virtue no less of unsurpassed personal charm than of a kind of artistic excellence exactly fitting the taste of his time, an official and social position only second to that of Sir Joshua himself. Yet the latter had shone throughout his career with a lustre unequalled since Rubens held court at Antwerp, surrounded by friends and pupils, and filled up the intervals of his artistic labours with diplomatic missions to Philip IV. of Spain and Charles I. of England. It is certainly in a great measure to his social and literary ability, to his power of assimilating what was best, not less in his social surroundings than in the artistic examples which he constantly set before himself, that Reynolds owed a position unique among the artists of

his time, and as gracefully held as worthily won. It is curious that his personality has become a kind of type, to which successive presidents of the august institution of which he was the most brilliant ornament have, by some unwritten law, been expected more or less to conform —and have, indeed, so far as their mental and artistic equipment has permitted, conformed.

Joshua Reynolds was born at Plympton in Devonshire, on the 16th of July 1723, the son of Samuel Reynolds and Theophila Potter. His father was master of the grammar school founded and endowed there by the celebrated Serjeant Maynard in 1658; his mother was the only child of the Rev. Thomas Baker, vicar of Bishop's Nymmet, near South Molton, Devonshire, and married, against her father's will, his curate or chaplain Mr Potter, which disobedience he resented by completely disinheriting her.

Samuel Reynolds would appear to have been one of those amiable, absent scholars, ignorant of the ways of the world, and but ill provided with its goods, types of whom are not uncommon in the literature of the eighteenth century. By his friends he was likened, we are told, to Fielding's Parson Adams, but he had also some traits which suggest Goldsmith's immortal Dr Primrose. It is supposed that Samuel Reynolds received £120 per annum as master of the school—a sum then by no means so inconsiderable as it now appears—but this cannot, even at its then value, have enabled him to do much for the advancement of six children, the survivors of a family of eleven, of whom Joshua was the tenth. Malone, the literary friend of Sir Joshua's latest years, and one of his executors, has stated that the somewhat uncommon Christian name was given to him by his father with the fantastic notion that it would perhaps recommend

him to the attention and kindness of some person bearing it also, who might possibly be led, even by so slight a circumstance, to become a benefactor. A much more satisfactory explanation is, however, Leslie and Taylor's plain statement that he received his name from his father's brother, the Rev. Joshua Reynolds, Rector of Stoke Charity, Hants, who was his godfather by proxy.

Joshua must have obtained at his father's grammar school a fair, if not a very elaborate, training in the classics, seeing that both his Discourses and his conversation contain examples of the then obligatory Latin quotations, so well understood and applied, that they could not always have been suggested by others. Such knowledge in that direction as he possessed can scarcely have been carried much further by actual study during his practically uninterrupted career as a painter. Allan Cunningham infers that the education of the future painter must have been neglected by his father, but there seems no reason for accepting this gratuitous conjecture, save the very insufficient one that some few orthographical and grammatical faults have been detected in the letters and papers of his maturity,

Though, like the majority of those who have achieved renown in art, he exhibited considerable precocity in youth, and with sufficient clearness indicated the true bent of his genius, this precocity was nothing like that exhibited, for instance, by Opie, the Cornish Wonder, or by the youthful Thomas Lawrence, who, at the age of ten, had already become a professional draughtsman in crayons. The young artist's first attempts are said to have been made in copying several little things done by two of his sisters. His sister Elizabeth related that, as pencils and paper were not provided for the youthful

enthusiasts, they were allowed to draw on the white-washed walls of a long passage with burnt sticks, and that Joshua's productions were by no means the most remarkable of the primitive essays in design, he being nicknamed *The Clown*. He himself informed Malone in later years that he had eagerly copied such prints as he met with in his father's books, especially those given in Dryden's edition of *Plutarch's Lives*. But his greatest source of delight was Jacob Cats's *Book of Emblems*, which his grandmother by his father's side, Mary Ainsworth, brought with her from Holland.

A famous relic of Joshua's boyhood is the original pen-and-ink sketch drawn by him on the back of a Latin exercise, with a note by his father, in which the pedagogue peeps out: "This is drawn by Joshua in school out of pure idleness." This sketch, together with a pen-and-ink drawing of the interior of a library, and another sketch, annotated by Reynolds *père* as "drawn not from another picture but from life," were in the memorable exhibition of the works of Sir Joshua Reynolds, brought together in 1883-4 at the Grosvenor Gallery.

When but eight years old he eagerly studied and absorbed *The Jesuit's Perspective*, a treatise in his father's possession which he had accidentally lighted upon, and so fairly mastered its contents that he was able to draw in perspective the schoolhouse at Plympton with a correctness sufficient to call forth from his father the admiring remark, "Now, this exemplifies what the author of the perspective asserts in his preface, that, by observing the rules laid down in his book, a man may do wonders—for this is wonderful."

At the age of twelve years he painted, as his first attempt in oils, a portrait of the Rev. Thomas Smart, a

tutor in the family of Richard Edgcumbe, afterwards the first Lord Edgcumbe. This picture was painted in a boat-house at Cremyll Beach, under Mount Edgcumbe, on a canvas which was part of a boat-sail, and with the common paint used in shipwrights' painting sheds.

A deep impression was made on young Joshua by the perusal of the *Treatise on Painting* written by Richardson, the father-in-law of his future master, Hudson. We are told, indeed, that Johnson, who would hardly be likely to originate any remark with regard to an art of which he professed absolute ignorance, attributed the first fondness of Reynolds for painting to his perusal of this treatise. It seems much more likely, however, that in its grandiloquent paragraphs—of which Leslie and Taylor give some typical excerpts—may be found the first source and inspiration of the President's theories on "high art" and the "grand style," as worked out in those famous *Discourses*, with the precepts of which, luckily for the world, his practice was so little in agreement. We have Malone's authority for the statement that "the perusal of the *Treatise* so delighted and inflamed his mind that Raffaele appeared to him superior to the most illustrious names of ancient or modern time." If we substitute for the name of Raphael that of Michelangelo, or, as Reynolds wrote it, "Michael Angelo," this view is the one that he continued to proclaim —at any rate in words, if not by example—all through the years of his rise and maturity, down to the very day of his dignified exit from the Royal Academy and from public life.

It was not until Joshua was seventeen years of age that it was decided to apprentice him to Hudson, then, in the dearth of a better, the most fashionable portrait-painter of his time. This was accomplished through the intervention of Mr Cutcliffe, an attorney at Bideford, the

required premium of £120 being in part furnished by Samuel Reynolds, in part by his eldest daughter, Mrs Palmer. Thomas Hudson, himself a native of Devonshire, was the pupil as well as the son-in-law of Richardson, and may be counted as the last and not the best of the school of which the creator and protagonist was Sir Godfrey Kneller, a master still so highly esteemed at this period that, as Reynolds himself afterwards stated, none would have ventured to compare even Van Dyck with him on equal terms. Hudson's hard, conscientious, and not a little wooden presentments of his contemporaries have the redeeming quality of a certain straightforwardness and sincerity, due to his simplicity and *naïveté* of standpoint. Much of the costume and accessories in them was painted by his favourite drapery-man, Van Haaken, according to a convenient custom initiated over here by Van Dyck when, in his third and final period he became, not without injury to his art, the supreme fashion in England.

Nowhere can the gulf which separates Hudson from Reynolds, Gainsborough and the school created by them, be better appreciated that in the series of portraits arranged in the dining-room at Longford Castle, Salisbury, the seat of the Earl of Radnor. There some half-dozen of Hudson's kitcats and three-quarter lengths of personages belonging to the Bouverie family hang face to face with the similar performances of Sir Joshua and Gainsborough; other members of the same family being depicted by Vanloo, Dahl, Raphael Mengs, and two of the most fascinating of female artists—Angelica Kauffmann, whose career rather than whose work interests us, and the really brilliant, if not a little cold and superficial, Madame Vigée-Lebrun.

It is, perhaps, worth while to correct here an error

perpetuated in Leslie and Taylor's generally very accurate work. They quote Mason without comment when he speaks of the Vanloo (or, more properly, Van Loo), who painted with considerable success in England between 1737 and 1742, as a Dutchman, whereas he was none other than the well-known French painter, Jean-Baptiste Van Loo, Dutch in name only, but in birth, education, and style, distinctively French (Vol. I. p. 104). This is the more curious because the misdescribed artist was the elder brother, and the master of the more famous Carle Van Loo, whose acquaintance Reynolds made later on, and whom the biographers then correctly describe.

In the National Portrait Gallery there are, by J. B. Van Loo, portraits of Sir Robert Walpole, Lord Hervey, and Pope's patron and friend, Richard Temple, Viscount Cobham.

It was while young Reynolds was apprenticed to Hudson that he had an adventure which, slight as it was, gave him inexpressible delight. He had been sent one day to make a purchase for Hudson at a sale of pictures, and found himself in the midst of the crowd gathered in the auction-room, when all at once he heard "Mr Pope, Mr Pope," whispered about. The crowd opened a passage for the author of the *Rape of the Lock*—as we should to-day do for a royal personage or a prominent statesman, but not, it is feared, for a great poet—and hands were held out right and left to touch him as he passed along, bowing to the bystanders. Joshua, being in the second rank only, put out his hand under the arm of the person standing immediately in front of him, and grasped that of the great satirist. Thus, for the first and only time, the future painter of Sterne, of Johnson, of Goldsmith, of Gibbon, of Burke, the future great master whose star had not then as much as begun to twinkle

above the horizon, came in contact with the most brilliant figure of an age which had then almost passed away—himself destined to endure but a very few years longer.

Reynolds had been bound to his master for four years, but he remained with him only between two and three. The accounts as to the real cause of disagreement between Hudson and himself are so conflicting that it is almost impossible to sift the true from the false. Jealousy is stated to have been the cause, that jealousy of higher gifts and already more perfect achievement which crops up in the dealings between so many great pupils and their masters, and on the tales accumulated round which we must always look with a certain amount of wholesome suspicion, while stopping short of absolute disbelief. Who is not acquainted with the legend that has grown up round the beautiful figure of an angel inserted by Leonardo da Vinci in Verrocchio's famous "Baptism" (now in the *Accademia delle Belle Arti* of Florence); and with its alleged effect on the elder master's career? To whom is the apparently well-founded story of Tintoret's expulsion from Titian's studio not familiar? Less known, but resting on at least as broad a basis of truth, is the pathetic tale of Watteau's jealousy of Jean-Baptiste Pater, which we cannot disregard, little as we can conceive any cause for such jealousy. Here Watteau himself furnishes incontrovertible evidence of the truth of the story, when he summons the dismissed pupil to his side during his final illness, and gives practical effect to a death-bed repentance by employing the last month of his prematurely worn-out life in seeking to impart to him the secrets of his subtle, brilliant palette.

The current story in the present instance, as given by

Farington, and quoted by Leslie and Taylor, is that Reynolds excited the jealousy of his teacher by the striking portrait which he painted of an elderly female servant in the house. Hudson appears to have ordered him one evening to carry a portrait to his drapery-painter, Van Haaken, for completion, and to have picked a quarrel with him for having, on account of a rain-shower, put off taking it until the morning. The teacher, according to this same authority, ordered his too promising pupil forthwith to leave his house, refusing him even the delay necessary for communicating with his father.

Reynolds went on the day of his dismissal by Hudson to his uncle's chambers in the Temple, and thence, at his uncle's direction, returned to Devonshire. No great ire can well have been aroused in the breast of any of the disputants, seeing that Samuel Reynolds, in a letter dated August 19th, 1743, addressed to Mr Cutcliffe, writes,—"I shall only say there is no controversy I was ever let into wherein I was so little offended with either party. In the meantime I bless God, and Mr Hudson, and you for the extreme success that has attended Joshua hitherto. . . ." Here we have, by inference, evidence of that calm, unruffled temperament which was not the least precious gift among those lavished by nature on our painter, and proof, too, that this quality must have been inherited from an even calmer and more benign father. Whatever may have been the master's motive at the time—and it can scarcely have been a worthy one—the pupil certainly neither felt nor showed any rancour, since we find him soon afterwards resuming friendly relations with his ex-teacher, and keeping up those relations until the close of Hudson's life. Whether any part of the premium paid by the Reynoldses was returned does

not appear; should this have been the case, it would be easier to understand the singular placability of the family.

The young artist now spent three further years in Devonshire, obtaining naturally but little opportunity of perfecting himself in his art, but, as we learn from his father's letters, getting plenty of occupation as a portrait-painter. He told Malone in later years that he always looked upon this period of his life as so much time thrown away, both as regards his career as an artist and his progress in the knowledge of the world and mankind. All the same, he never looked upon the dispute with Hudson which brought his *Lehrjahre* to an abrupt end otherwise than as a fortunate circumstance, compelling him, as it did, to break away from the tameness and wooden conventionality of his master, and setting him free to develop from noble models an original manner of his own.

The first performance of his which attracted notice, was the portrait of Captain Hamilton, father of the Marquis of Abercorn, painted in the year 1746. When, at a late period of his life—as Malone records—he saw this painting, he was surprised to find it so well done, and lamented that in such a length of time he should not have made a greater progress in his art. A portrait-group, dating from about the same period, represents, in the fashion of the day, the same gentleman, together with Lord Eliot, his wife and their children; this is in the collection of the Earl of St Germans at Port Eliot. A "Study of a Boy reading," formerly in the possession of Sir Henry Englefield, and now in that of the Earl of Normanton, shows the half-length figure of a youth seated at a table, holding a book in both hands. It is signed and dated on the book—"1747, Jo.

Reynolds, pinxit Novr." (Old Masters' Exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1882).

Leslie and Taylor give a list of several other portraits painted about this time, the most remarkable of these being that of Miss Chudleigh, afterwards notorious as Duchess of Kingston, and then in the first flush of the youth and beauty. To this period must belong also the first portrait painted by Reynolds of himself—bequeathed by him to his niece, Miss Palmer, afterwards Marchioness of Thomond; by her left to her sister, Mrs Theophila Gwatkin; given by the latter to her grandson, J. R. Gwatkin, and by Mrs Gwatkin sent to the Grosvenor Gallery in 1884. From the same source was contributed, on the same occasion, the famous half-length in spectacles done in 1788; the last portrait that Sir Joshua—in the repeated portrayal of his own physiognomy, as in many other things the emulator of Rembrandt,—painted of himself.

Reynolds was recalled to Devonshire by the illness of his gentle, lovable father, which terminated fatally on Christmas Day, 1746. This necessitated the removal of the family from the schoolmaster's residence at Plympton, and the young artist then set up house with his two unmarried sisters in a house at Plymouth Dock.

The painter's chief biographers attribute a great influence on his style at this stage of his career to the works of William Gandy of Exeter, and as the present writer has not had a recent opportunity of making himself acquainted with the performances of this remarkable provincial painter, they shall, on this point, be allowed to speak for themselves:—

"The father of William Gandy was a pupil of Vandyke, and was much employed by the Duke of Ormond

in Ireland, on which account his works are elsewhere unknown. It is said the elder Gandy painted so much in Vandyke's style, that some of his pictures have passed for works of his master. The style of his son, however it is to be accounted for, was different. Northcote speaks of a portrait by the younger Gandy that might be mistaken for a work of Rembrandt, and Farington describes the effects of his pictures as 'peculiar, solemn and forcible.' I have myself seen a head of a boy by Gandy, which looked very like an early work of Sir Joshua."

To this pre-Italian period of the painter's career must belong a remarkable portrait of himself by himself, which, since 1858, has been in the National Portrait Gallery. It shows the youthful Reynolds in half-length, wearing a yellow-brown coat, blue waistcoat, and plain white neck-cloth, with large linen ruffles at the wrists. He has his palette and mahl stick in his right hand, and holds his left in front of his forehead, gazing the while intently at the spectator (or at himself in the mirror)—an attitude which may possibly have been borrowed from some seventeenth-century Bolognese painter limning himself. This was engraved in stipple (the reverse way) in 1818 by R. Cooper as a frontispiece to Northcote's *Life of Reynolds*, and also in mezzotint by S. W. Reynolds.

It was in 1749 that there came to our painter the opportunity which, grasped at, proved to be the turning-point of his career, and enabled him to metamorphose, with the directing influence of the acknowledged masterpieces of Italian art, a method that might, under other circumstances, have remained undeveloped, into the style which has made him one of the chief glories of English art, and, in portraiture a master of the first rank.

The gallant young Commodore Keppel, although then

only in his twenty-fourth year, had already achieved celebrity, first by his voyage round the world at the age of eighteen, under Anson, and again by the adventure which befell him, when, at the age of twenty-one he was in command of His Majesty's fifty-one gun ship *Maidstone.* Having lost his ship off the coast of France when in hot pursuit of a French vessel, he nevertheless, by great exertion, succeeded in saving most of his crew, and was afterwards, by unanimous verdict of a court-martial, honourably acquitted of all blame. This incident, was later on, commemorated by Reynolds in a memorable full-length—his first sensational success—to which reference will be made in its proper place. Admiral Anson was himself depicted by Reynolds in 1755 in a half-length, of which the original is at Hardwicke, and a copy in the National Portrait Gallery. Keppel had, early in 1749, been appointed to the command in the Mediterranean, with the rank of commodore, and entrusted with a mission to the States of Barbary. He sailed from Spithead in the *Centurion*, but the ship springing both her topmasts, he was compelled to put into Plymouth for repairs, and while there visited Lord Edgcumbe at his seat, and made acquaintance with Reynolds, in whom he became so much interested, that he offered him a passage in the *Centurion*, an offer which the young painter gladly accepted.

Thus was laid the foundation of a friendship which was to endure and ripen during the whole lives of these two strangely dissimilar Englishmen, both of them destined, in widely diverging paths, to earn the highest fame, to command the praise and the rewards of their grateful country. The particulars of the voyage, the romantic incident of the defiance by the "beardless boy" of the redoubtable Dey of Algiers, belong to history and need not be further dwelt upon here.

It was while young Keppel's long-drawn-out *pourparlers* with the Algerines were going on, that Reynolds found himself frequently at Minorca, where, going ashore at Port Mahon, he successively painted the portraits of almost all the officers of the garrison. It was there that, while out riding, he fell with his horse down a precipice, and was so cut about the face that he remained slightly disfigured, a scar being ever afterwards visible on his upper lip. He soon after travelled to Rome, by way of Leghorn, and thence addressed to his patron, Lord Edgcumbe, the following curious letter :—

"My Lord,—I am now (thanks to your Lordship) at the height of my wishes, in the midst of the greatest works of art that the world has produced. I had a very long passage, though a very pleasant one. I am at last in Rome, having seen many places and sights which I never thought of seeing. I have been at Lisbon, Cadiz, Gibraltar, Algiers, and Mahon.

"The Commodore stayed at Lisbon a week, in which time there happened two of the greatest sights that could be seen had he stayed there a whole year,—a bull feast, and the procession of *Corpus Christi.* Your Lordship will excuse me if I say that, from the kind treatment and great civilities I have received from the Commodore, I fear I have even laid your Lordship under obligations to him on my account ; since from nothing but your Lordship's recommendation I could possibly expect to meet with that polite behaviour with which I have always been treated. I had the use of his cabin and his study of books as if they had been my own, and when he went ashore he generally took me with him, so that I not only had an opportunity of seeing a great deal, but I saw it with all the advantages as if I had travelled as his equal.

At Cadiz, I saw another bull feast. I ask your Lordship's pardon for being guilty of that usual piece of ill-manners in speaking so much of myself; I should not have committed it after such favours. Impute my not writing to the true reason—I thought it impertinent to write to your Lordship without a proper reason—to let you know where I am, if your Lordship should have any commands here that I am capable of executing. Since I have been in Rome I have been looking about the palaces for a fit picture of which I might take a copy to present your Lordship with, though it would have been much more genteel to have sent the picture without any previous intimation of it. Any one you choose, the larger the better, as it will have a more grand effect when hung up, and a kind of painting I like more than little. Though perhaps it will be too great a presumption to expect it, I must needs own I most impatiently wait for this order from your Lordship. —I am, etc., etc., JOSHUA REYNOLDS."

This is the only occasion on which we find Reynolds, in those relations with the mighty of the land which were afterwards to become so constant, over-genteel, and a trifle what we should to-day call snobbish. Considering a certain awkwardness in the position, his lack of the usage which he afterwards so easily acquired, and his youth at the time, the false note here struck, but never, it may be safely stated, sounded again, may be readily excused.

No further correspondence belonging to the two years which the young painter passed with such "measureless content," and such fruitfulness, as regard his later career, at Rome, has been preserved, although it is conjectured that he must have written much to his two

married sisters, Mrs Palmer and Mrs Johnson, who had jointly advanced the necessary funds for his journey to Italy, for which he had given them a bond, still preserved by the descendants of Mrs Palmer. In a fragment preserved in Malone's *Account of the Life and Writings of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, which serves to introduce the *Literary Works* edited by him, the following interesting account is given of the painter's first sensations on visiting the Vatican ; in estimating which, however, it should be borne in mind that it was not written until long after the youthful period to which reference is made, and that though there may be, and undoubtedly is, more of *Wahrheit* than *Dichtung* in its particulars, it yet unconsciously mingles the more mature judgments of later years with the ingenuous impressions of youth :—

" It has frequently happened " (says this great painter), " as I was informed by the keeper of the Vatican, that many of those whom he had conducted through the various apartments of that edifice, when about to be dismissed, have asked for the works of Raffaelle, and would not believe that they had already passed through the rooms where they are preserved, so little impression had those performances made on them. One of the first painters now in France told me that this circumstance happened to himself, though he now looks on Raffaelle with that veneration which he deserves from all painters and lovers of the art. I remember very well my own disappointment when I first visited the Vatican ; but, on confessing my feelings to a brother-student, of whose ingenuousness I had a high opinion, he acknowledged that the works of Raffaelle had the same effect on him, or rather, that they did not produce the effect which he expected. This was a great relief to my mind ; and on inquir-

ing further of other students, I found that those persons only who, from natural imbecility, appeared to be incapable of ever relishing those divine performances, made pretensions to instantaneous raptures on first beholding them.

"In justice to myself, however, I must add that, though disappointed and mortified at not finding myself enraptured with the works of this great master, I did not for a moment conceive or suppose that the name of Raffaelle, and those admirable paintings in particular, owed their reputation to the ignorance and prejudice of mankind; on the contrary, my not relishing them as I was conscious I ought to have done, was one of the most humiliating circumstances that ever happened to me. I found myself in the midst of works executed upon principles with which I was unacquainted. I felt my ignorance, and stood abashed. All the indigested notions of paintings which I had brought with me from England, where the art was in the lowest state it had ever been in (it could not indeed be lower), were to be totally done away and eradicated from my mind.

"It was necessary, as it is expressed on a very solemn occasion, that I should become *as a little child*. Notwithstanding my disappointment, I proceeded to copy some of those excellent works. I viewed them again and again; I even affected to feel their merit, and to admire them more than I really did. In a short time a new taste and new perceptions began to dawn upon me; and I was convinced that I had originally formed a false opinion of the perfection of art, and that this great painter was well entitled to the high rank which he holds in the estimation of the world. The truth is, that if these works had really been what I had expected, they would have contained beauties superficial and alluring, but

by no means such as would have entitled them to the great reputation which they have so long and so justly obtained.

"Having since that period frequently revolved this subject in my mind, I am now clearly of opinion that a relish for the higher excellencies of art is an acquired taste, which no man ever possessed without long cultivation and great labour and attention.

"On such occasions as that which I have mentioned, we are often ashamed of our apparent dulness, as if it were to be expected that our minds, like tinder, should instantly catch fire from the divine spark of Raffaelle's genius.

"I flatter myself that *now* it would be so, and that I have a just and lively perception of his great powers; but let it be always remembered that the excellence of his style is not on the surface, but lies deep, and at the first view is seen but mistily.

"It is the florid style which strikes at once, and captivates the eye for a time, without ever satisfying the judgment. Nor does painting in this respect differ from other arts. A just, poetical taste, and the acquisition of a nice, discriminative musical ear, are equally the work of time. Even the eye, however perfect in itself, is often unable to distinguish between the brilliancy of two diamonds, though the experienced jeweller will be amazed at its blindness, not considering that there was a time when he himself could not have been able to pronounce which of the two was the most perfect, and that his own power of discrimination was acquired by slow and imperceptible degrees."

A note in one of the Roman note-books, headed "*Copies of Pictures I made in Rome*," gives a selection of works of various styles and schools, not, however, so distinctively

illustrating either the painter's subsequent practice or his theory, that it need be here quoted in full.

More characteristic is the statement, "I was let into the Cappella Sistina in the morning, and remained there the whole day, a great part of which I spent in walking up and down it with great self-importance. Passing through, on my return, the rooms of Raphael, they appeared of an inferior order." This is especially interesting as giving at once, in a nutshell, Reynolds's view—at any rate, his theoretical view—of the giant of art. The man of calm, benignant temperament, the painter who was to excel in depicting high-bred female loveliness, was less moved by the balance, the rhythmical grace, the divine suavity of Raphael, than by the *terribilità*, the overwhelming power of Michelangelo, his hero, yet the one master whose unique qualities he could never hope to assimilate, or even superficially to imitate.

And yet there is no valid reason to doubt the sincerity of Sir Joshua's admiration for the mighty Buonarroti, or the attitude of admiring awe which he affected in speaking of, and in contemplating, his works. Still more did our painter, as evidenced over and over again in his *Discourses*, deem Michelangelo—with what propriety we will not here stay to discuss—the proper exemplar and model of young artists, and the master, the contemplation of whose works was best calculated to supply in their training those deficiencies of which he was only too painfully conscious in his own. Leslie and Taylor's often quoted, and often to be quoted, biography, generally so significant in its comment, contains, on the subject of Reynolds's preference of Michelangelo over Raphael, the following passage, the first part of which is as unexceptionable as the latter is utterly inexplicable:—"And yet it would seem that there is the most in common between Reynolds, so pre-eminently happy in

his representations of feminine and infantine grace, and the gentle Raphael. I imagine, however, that the superior powers of Michelangelo in colour (!), and in breadth of chiaroscuro, combined as they are with so many other noble qualities, commanded his homage at first sight, and retained it ever after."

Inferior as Raphael must be held to Titian, Tintoret, and the great Venetians in the special qualities of "colour and breadth of chiaroscuro," nevertheless he, the painter of the *Incendio del Borgo*," the "Deliverance of St Peter," the "Miracle of Bolsena," the "Heliodorus chased from the Temple," must be held to have surpassed his overwhelming Florentine rival as entirely in chiaroscuro as he does in colour—that is, when we estimate him, as a colourist, apart from those works in which the dark brush and leathery textures of Giulio Romano, translating his master's conceptions, rob them of half their charm. Michelangelo, who, even in the sublimest creation of a time when so much was great and aspiring—the vault of the Sistine Chapel—mainly preserves the standpoint of the sculptor, never so much aimed at making the fullest use of colour proper, that legitimate weapon, not less of the *frescante* undertaking monumental decorations than of the painter in tempera or oils. He would doubtless have applauded the famous dictum of Ingres—"*Le dessin c'est la probité de l'art;*" but scarcely with consistency the corollary of Théophile Thoré (Bürger)—"*Si le dessin est la probité de l'art, la couleur en est la vie.*"

A word must be said as to those so-called *Caricaturas* done by Reynolds in Rome, and of which Northcote remarks:—"I have heard Sir Joshua say that although it was universally allowed he executed such subjects with much humour and spirit, he yet held it absolutely necessary to abandon the practice, since it must corrupt his taste as

a portrait-painter, whose duty it becomes to aim at discovering the perfections only of those whom he is to represent."

This is but an insipid and imperfect theory of the great art of portraiture, and one which, if followed to the letter, would result in the production of lifeless and deplorable platitudes. We must take leave to doubt—Northcote notwithstanding—whether, in the narrow and truncated form here given, it is that of the painter of Sterne, Johnson, Gibbon, and Garrick.

Leonardo da Vinci, to whom we owe the most famous of the world's portraits, the *Monna Lisa del Giocondo* of the Louvre, was also the greatest among the heroic caricaturists, and indeed, in a sense, the inventor of the style.

To return, however, to these particular *caricaturas*, the most celebrated is that in which Reynolds more or less humorously portrayed, on the lines and in the postures of Raphael's "School of Athens," a number of those travelling Englishmen of fashion with whom the grand tour was then an obligation, and Rome the central point of their wanderings. Another similar group of satirical portraits, like the foregoing, painted in 1751, is that contributed by the then Duke of Devonshire to the Reynolds Exhibition at the Grosvenor Gallery, and which had, in 1831, been shown at the British Institution, under the designation: "Portraits of distinguished connoisseurs painted at Rome."

It was while making studies after Raphael in the Stanze of the Vatican, that Reynolds caught so severe a cold that, as its result, he remained deaf for the rest of his life, and was thenceforth condemned to the use of the ear-trumpet which came to be considered one of the chief of his outward attributes. Those who are acquainted with Italian galleries in mid-winter, and especially with the

icy halls of the Vatican, will not find much difficulty in crediting this statement, insufficient as the cause assigned may at first appear.

Reynolds, if he worshipped prostrate the master works of Buonarroti in the Sixtine, did not, so far as can be ascertained, venture upon any copies—confining his attention to Raphael, Titian, Rubens, Rembrandt, and noting admiringly, with the widest catholicity of taste, not only those masters, but Correggio, Barroccio, Van Dyck, Poussin, Borgognone, and Claude Lorrain. Equal with these in attraction for him, were seemingly the chief luminaries of the Bolognese school, the Carracci themselves, Guido, Domenichino, Guercino—then still at the apogee of their fame, and perhaps more genuinely admired by the connoisseurs of the day than the great prototypes of the rival schools, whose united excellences they strove to assimilate and give forth anew, but only succeeded in superficially imitating. It is significant and not a little amusing to find Reynolds, the worshipper of Michelangelo and Raphael, captivated by the decorative brilliancy and the agitated naturalism of Bernini as exemplified in a bust of Montoja then in the Church of S. Jacopo degli Spagnuoli, and in the *Anima Beata* and *Anima Damnata* in the sacristy of the same church.

For antique sculpture, indeed, even those wonders of the Vatican, then exercising an unrivalled attraction, but since, by modern research and modern appreciation, or rather depreciation, shorn of half their glory, Reynolds would appear to have had but little sympathy. He could, on occasion, express the obligatory enthusiasm for the great sister art, as is shown in the *Tenth Discourse*, in which, however, his vague and frigid generalisations proves how narrow and confined is his view of its scope, and how imperfectly he understands, outside his own branch, the grand style to which,

according to his precepts, sculpture should exclusively adhere.

The following is a typical passage from the *Discourse* in question :—

"Sculpture is an art of much more simplicity and uniformity than painting ; it cannot with propriety, and the best effect, be applied to many subjects.

"The object of its pursuit may be comprised in two words—Form and Character ; and those qualities are presented to us but in one manner, or in one style only ; whereas the powers of painting, as they are more various and extensive, so they are exhibited in as great a variety of manners.

"The Roman, Lombard, Florentine, Venetian, and Flemish schools all pursue the same end by different means. But sculpture having but one style, can only to one style of painting have any relation ; and to this (which is indeed the highest and most dignified that painting can boast) it has a relation so close, that it may be said to be almost the same art operating on different materials."

No doubt, Donatello, and the great *Quattrocento* schools of Tuscany which radiated from him, may have appeared hard, abrupt, and unideal, at a time when the plastic art was deemed to be in an inchoate stage until it reached, in the first years of the sixteenth century, that climax so soon to be followed by a rapid descent. Still, that his mighty personality, and the art upon which he has left his stamp should apparently make no impression whatever on Reynolds, is not a little strange. He could elsewhere own, though grudgingly and with many reservations, that "simplicity and truth, of which we are now speaking, is oftener found in the old masters that preceded the great age of painting than it ever was in that age,

and certainly much less since. We may instance Albert Dürer and Masaccio, from the latter of whom Raphael borrowed his figure of St Paul * preaching." Still more is one led to doubt Reynolds's power of truly appreciating the various degrees of excellence in the art of the statuary, when one finds him, even where his chief divinity is in question, making the following confession in the journal kept at Florence :—

"*Capella di S. Lorenzo.*"

"The four recumbent figures by Michael Angelo, with a Great Duke (*Il Pensieroso?*) by him.

"When I am here I think M. Angelo superior to the whole world for greatness of taste; when I look on the figures of the fountains in the Boboli, of which I have seen the models, I think him (Giovanni Bologna) greater than M. A., and I believe it would be a difficult thing to determine who was the greatest sculptor. The same doubt in regard to the Vatican and the Capella Sistina."

It is less surprising that the travelling artist's appreciation of the *Trecento* should have amounted to nil; that he should have passed through Assisi without any remark on that treasure-house of the infinitely noble art of Giotto, Simone Martino, Pietro Lorenzetti, and their following; that Santa Croce and Santa Maria Novella in Florence, even with their then more than half-hidden glories, should have left him unmoved. It is not given even to the greatest genius to break away entirely from its environment, to stand completely clear from the age in which it has its being; and Reynolds's genius, undoubted as it was, had not that peculiar quality which the German so appositely styles path-breaking (*bahnbrechend*). That

* The figure in question is really by Filippino Lippi.

the painter should have been enraptured with Correggio's "Holy Family with St Jerome," at Parma, and should say, "It gave me as great a pleasure as ever I received from looking on any picture" is natural enough. This recalls the raptures of Annibale Carracci, to whom, in comparison with the St Jerome, even the magnificent St Paul in the "St Cecilia" of Raphael appeared hard and cold.

It is interesting, as bearing upon practice in the future, to note at this period the admiration for isolated examples of Rembrandt, even when seen in the midst of their dazzling surroundings. Rooted in Reynolds's artistic nature, from the beginning—as some of the early performances enable us to surmise—this admiration for the forcefulness of the Rembrandtesque chiaroscuro did but grow as the English master's art matured.

His stay in Venice, which was not, however, prolonged much beyond the period of three weeks, is of peculiar interest to the student interested in the technical development of his very composite art. The following passage is of especial value as showing the practical fashion in which the young painter went to work to get at the Venetian method of distributing light, half-light, and shade.

"The method I took to avail myself of their principles was this. When I observed an extraordinary effect of light and shade in any picture, I took a leaf out of my pocket-book, and darkened every part of it in the same gradation of light and shade as the picture, leaving the white paper untouched to represent the light, and this without any attention to the subject, or to the drawing of the figures. A few trials of this kind will be sufficient to give their conduct in the management of their lights. After a few experiments I found the paper blotted nearly alike.

Their general practice appeared to be, to allow not above a quarter of the picture for the light, including in this portion both the principal and secondary lights; another quarter to be kept as dark as possible; and the remaining half kept in mezzotint or half-shadow.

"Rubens appears to have admitted rather more light than a quarter, and Rembrandt much less, scarcely an eighth. By this conduct Rembrandt's light is extremely brilliant, but it costs too much; the rest of the picture is sacrificed to this one object. That light will certainly appear the brightest which is surrounded with the greatest quantity of shade, supposing equal skill in the artist.

"By this means you may likewise remark the various forms and shapes of those lights, as well as the objects on which they are flung; whether a figure, or the sky, a white napkin, animals, or utensils, often introduced for this purpose only.

"It may be observed, likewise, what portion is strongly relieved, and how much is united with its ground, for it is necessary that some part (though a small one is sufficient) should be sharp and cutting against its ground, whether it be light on a dark, or dark on a light ground, in order to give firmness and distinctness to the work; if, on the other hand, it is relieved on every side, it will appear as if inlaid on its ground.

"Such a blotted paper, held at a distance from the eye, will strike the spectator as something excellent for the disposition of light and shadow, though it does not distinguish whether it is a history, a portrait, a landscape, dead game, or anything else, for the same principles extend to every branch of the art."

It is impossible here to analyse the Venetian Notes, but they will be found printed, *in extenso*, in Leslie and

Taylor's *Life.* Reynolds's extraordinary assiduity in noting—with especial reference to local colour, relative values, and technique generally—the finest pictures then to be seen in Venice, proves, if any proof were necessary, that his whole heart went out to them, however much he might deem it necessary, in the interest of art, to generalise about Michelangelo, and to class the incomparable masters of Venice in the second rank—that of what he calls, in the *Discourses*, "Ornamental Art."

Sir Joshua, the president of a great official institution, the lecturer feeling the responsibility of guiding artistic youth in the path in which it should wander, may, with absolute sincerity, have reasoned himself into the temporary belief that the Bolognese more truly represented the grand style, and therefore, on theoretical grounds, deserved to be put forward into the first rank. It is impossible, however, to believe that Reynolds the painter, Reynolds the colourist, Reynolds the brilliant and facile executant, could place the great sixteenth-century masters of Venice below, or, at any rate, in a category inferior to, the seventeenth-century eclectics of the Bolognese school.

Pretty, and, on intrinsic grounds, quite believable, is Northcote's anecdote—communicated, he says, by Sir Joshua himself—that, while at Venice, being at the opera with some other English gentlemen, a ballad was played or sung which had been heard in every street in London when he was last there, and that it brought tears into his eyes, as well as into those of his countrymen present with him.

Reynolds journeyed home by Padua, Brescia, Bergamo, Milan, and Turin, meeting a little beyond the last-mentioned place his old master, Hudson, on his way to Rome with the sculptor Roubiliac. At Paris, where the artist spent a month, he painted a portrait of Mrs Chambers,

wife of the notable architect, William Chambers, with whom, as Sir William Chambers, Reynolds was afterwards to be so closely associated at the Royal Academy. The lady, who was of considerable beauty, was depicted with a large straw hat overshadowing the upper part of her face.

Even fresh from contact with the frigid and utterly decrepit style of the Italy of the eighteenth century, Reynolds appears to have looked down with unmeasured scorn on the French art of the Louis Quatorze and Louis Quinze periods, enveloping everything alike in one common condemnation. What he understood by French art was evidently that of Le Brun, Rigaud, Largillière, Lemoyne, Boucher, Jouvenet, Subleyras, the Coypels, Van Loos, and their kind. Later on, he has sympathetically and learnedly criticised the genuinely classical, if occasionally dry, performances of Nicholas Poussin, and has appreciated, with a due sense of its true worth, if not with complete sympathy, the exquisite art of that greatest of French colourists, Antoine Watteau. Not a little curious is it, under the circumstances just mentioned, that one of the favourite pictures of the master in his late time was Sebastian Bourdon's "Return of the Ark," a work which, although deemed worthy of special eulogy in the *Discourses*, now passes comparatively unnoticed at the National Gallery, where it has found a final resting-place.

In the France of the eighteenth century, Sir Joshua all his life knows nothing of those most admirable and most distinctive of its artists (other than Watteau), Maurice-Quentin de La Tour—greatest among portraitists of the time, from the French standpoint; Chardin—the delineator of the lower *bourgeoisie*, from its wholesomest, its most pathetic aspect, and, above all, the king of all still-life painters; and Jean-Antoine Houdon—the im-

mortal sculptor who, in the later art of the century, was to produce the famous "Voltaire," the "Diane," and masterpieces in portraiture too numerous for mention. There is little excuse, however, for the slap-dash statement of Leslie and Taylor's *Life*, in justification of the master's view :—"Watteau had been dead more than thirty years, and all that was excellent in French art, indeed, in the art of the whole Continent, had died with him."

Reynolds arrived in London on October 16th, 1752, but did not long remain stationary there. According to Northcote, "on his return he found his health in such an indifferent state, as to judge it prudent to pay a visit to his native air." It would appear that he remained about three months absent in Devonshire, painting, while at Plymouth, a portrait of Dr John Mudge, an eminent physician, the son of the Rev. Zachariah Mudge, Prebendary of Exeter, and the friend of Johnson and Burke. The young painter being very strongly advised by his patron, Lord Edgcumbe, to establish himself permanently in London, proceeded with as little delay as possible to take apartments in St Martin's Street, Leicester Fields, not then the dingy, squalid thoroughfare that it so long has been, but a fashionable street, sacred to artists, in which Thornhill, Hayman, and Roubiliac had resided, and the Burneys, some twenty years later on (in 1773), were to take up their abode.

CHAPTER II

Reynolds sets up House in St Martin's Street—Frances Reynolds—Portrait of Giuseppe Marchi in a Turban—Sensation excited among Artists—He removes to Newport Street and raises his Prices—Full-length of Commodore Keppel in 1752—Dramatic Portraiture—*Le peintre turc*—First Meeting with Dr Johnson—Influence of latter on Reynolds's Mode of Thought and Literary Style—His First Portrait by Reynolds—The Duke of Richmond's Private Academy for Students—Kitty Fisher in several Portraits—Portraits of Horace Walpole, Master Jacob Bouverie, Elizabeth Gunning Duchess of Hamilton, Anne, Countess of Albemarle, etc.—Authentic Signatures on several Early Portraits—Three Letters to Johnson's *Idler*—The Foundling Hospital—Exhibition in the Strand—Removal to Leicester Fields—The Gilt Coach—Portrait of Laurence Sterne—Reynolds as a Painter of Men—Power to present True Individuality of Sitters.

THE bachelor household was presided over by the painter's youngest sister, Miss Frances Reynolds, a lady who must have possessed many estimable qualities, since she was the "dearest dear" of Dr Johnson, and one of the persons to whom he was most devotedly and respectfully attached. Unfortunately she was about the last person in the world who should have been selected to live, in the close proximity necessitated by daily life, with her brother. Her qualities as a painter are summed up in the famous anecdote which makes Reynolds, speaking of the copies which she made of his pictures, say: "They make other people laugh, and me cry." This would indeed appear to have been the effect on him, not only of

her art but her entire personality, during the long period over which her reign in his household extended. If we accept as accurate Madame d'Arblay's estimate of her character, formed, it is true, many years after the period with which we are dealing, it is easy to see that the constant nervous irritability, the perplexity of mind, the general fidgetiness of Miss Reynolds, must have been even heightened by being brought in contact with the imperturbable serenity, the deliberation, the kindness a little chill but unvarying, and the strong sense of natural equity of her brother. Her temperament and that of the often estimable, but thoroughly impracticable, persons of her class may perhaps be best described by the homely adjective maddening. Tom Taylor's note to page 92, Vol. I., of the *Life*, gives an excellent summary of the restless lady's character in relation to that of our master.

The first picture that Reynolds painted on thus establishing himself in London is assumed to have been the portrait-study of his pupil, Giuseppe Marchi, whom he had brought with him from Rome. In connection with this painting (now the property of the Royal Academy), Northcote, who, as the Vasari of Reynolds, appears to have nourished a special spite against Hudson, tells the anecdote that the latter, calling to inspect the performance while in progress, exclaimed, "By G—, Reynolds, you don't paint as well as when you left England!" Ellis, a painter of a certain repute, and a believer in the unbounded supremacy of Kneller, came also to see this same head, which was creating some little sensation in artistic circles, and was horror-struck at the audacious departure from the consecrated style in portraiture. He remonstrated with the young innovator, and when the latter attempted to defend himself and argue the point, burst into a great rage, and, flinging at him "Shakespeare in poetry and Kneller in

painting, damme," bounces out of the room. The picture now hangs in the little-frequented Diploma Gallery at Burlington House, where its undimmed brilliancy and relatively advanced style quite justify the excitement it created at the time of its inception. The young Roman model is dressed up, much as Rembrandt dressed up the sitters of his own immediate circle, in a brilliant, outlandish costume which, notwithstanding the turban head-dress, inclines rather to the Hungarian than the Oriental. Indeed, there is a singularly strong flavour of Rembrandt about the whole, considering the severe training recently undergone by the painter in Italy. The scheme of colour is richer and hotter, the mere painting more brilliant than in many canvases dating from the sixties, and altogether the performance must rank as an exceptional one for its time.

Reynolds in 1753 already found his prospects so good, and his horizon so rapidly opening out, that he removed to a large and handsome house on the north side of Great Newport Street, where he set up housekeeping, and raised his prices to a level with those of his former master, Hudson, whose practice was as yet unimpaired—that is, he charged twelve guineas for a head, twenty-four for a half-length, and forty-eight for a whole length.

We are told by Mason that "his (Reynolds's) early friend, Lord Edgcumbe, persuaded many of the first nobility to sit to him for their pictures; and he very judiciously applied to such of them as had the strongest features, and whose likeness, therefore, it was the easiest to hit. Most of them also had, but a little time before, sat to Vanloo,* a Dutchman, who, while he remained in

* No Dutchman, but, as has been already pointed out, the noted French painter, Jean-Baptiste Van Loo.

England, was in high fashion, though a dirty colourist, and whose only merit was that of taking a true but tame resemblance of features. Amongst those personages were the old Dukes of Devonshire and Grafton ; and of these the young artist made portraits, not only expressive of their countenances, but of their figures, and this in a manner so novel, simple and natural, yet withal so dignified, as procured him general applause, and set him, in a moment, above his old master, Hudson, and that master's rival, Vanloo. But the portrait which tended most to establish his reputation was a whole-length of Captain Keppel (afterwards Admiral) on a sandy beach, the background a tempestuous sea. A figure so animated, so well drawn, and all its accompaniments so perfectly in unison with it, I believe never was produced before by an English pencil."

Painted in 1753, this famous picture—an epoch-making one in the artistic career of Reynolds, just as the first meeting with the original had made a veritable epoch in his life—is based on an incident in the career of the heroic young Captain (or, as he afterwards became, Commodore) Keppel, to which reference has already been made. It shows him at the moment when the *Maidstone*, of which he was the commander, was shipwrecked on the French coast while in pursuit of a large French vessel. Alone on a rocky sea-shore, with frothing breakers curling to his very feet, he is stepping forward in a statuesque and somewhat conventional attitude, presumably in the act of giving those orders which secured the safety of his crew, and subsequently caused him to be honourably acquitted by the unanimous resolution of the court-martial. This is essentially a dramatic portrait, and, as such, it is not surprising that, following upon a century of Lely, Kneller, and their less worthy followers, it should have made an unbounded sensation.

The dramatic portrait, in which to permanence of characterisation and pictorial charm must be superadded the suggestion, rather than the representation, of a characteristic episode of the sitter's career, must necessarily entail a considerable amount of risk; the ridiculous is so near to the sublime. Nevertheless, the few pictures of this class in which absolute success has been achieved are counted among the notable canvases of the world. Such are Titian's great equestrian portrait, at Madrid, of Charles V. at the battle of Mühlberg; Moretto's splendid "Count Sciarra Martinengo" in our own National Gallery; such, too, the tragic "Lucrezia," by Lorenzo Lotto, in the gallery at Dorchester House; such Sir Joshua's own "Mrs Siddons as the Tragic Muse," and the "Lord Heathfield" in the national collection; and—to descend to a lower platform—the "Marshal Prim" of Henri Regnault, in the Louvre.

It cannot in honesty be said that the "Commodore Keppel," quite apart from the question of technical brilliancy of execution, in which it has, of course, been greatly surpassed by Reynolds's subsequent productions, is entitled to rank among the complete successes of dramatic portraiture. It has vigorous dramatic action—a little too much suggesting, perhaps, "King Canute commanding the waves to retire"—but hardly, in the estimation of the writer, the true dramatic suggestiveness, which alone can justify such a conception. Nevertheless, it represented, in its way, a bold and original breaking away from an accumulation of tradition, and as such it was, what it has already been styled, an "epoch-making" work, and deserved the notice which it attracted, and the sudden and vast increase of reputation which it brought to its author. The picture was engraved in 1759 by Edward Fisher. It was No. 181 in the exhibition of Sir Joshua's works at the

Grosvenor Gallery, to which it was contributed by the Earl of Albemarle.

Just about the time of our painter's first great success, that is 1753, there came to London the Swiss painter, Liotard, who had achieved reputation in various quarters of Europe, and especially in Austria, mainly as a portraitist in pastels and water-colours, but also as a miniature painter in enamel. *Le Peintre turc*,* as he was called from his assumption of the Levantine garb, with a long beard, which lent to it an additional *vraisemblance*, obtained, during his two years' stay in London, the same vogue that he had enjoyed elsewhere. For once the imperturbable, the consistently amiable and just Reynolds shows unmistakable temper, in his depreciation of an artist who, even though he could not in Paris hold his own against La Tour and Perronneau, nevertheless, on occasion, showed conspicuous ability. "The only merit," said Reynolds, "in Liotard's pictures is neatness, which, as a general rule, is the characteristic of a low genius, or, rather, no genius at all. His pictures are just what ladies do when they paint for amusement; nor is there any person, how poor soever their (*sic*) talents may be, but in a very few years, by dint of practice, may possess themselves of every qualification in the art which this great man has got." This is rather extravagant dispraise as applied to the favourite limner of Maria Theresa, the painter of the popular "*Belle Chocolatière*" of the Dresden Gallery, and of the charming "*Madame d'Epinay*" in the Museum of Geneva.

It was while Reynolds lived in Newport Street that he made another of those acquaintances destined to exercise so strong and permanent influence on his life and mode of thought—this time the most important of

* His portrait in pastels, by himself, is in the gallery of the Uffizi; it shows him in this semi-Oriental garb.

all, since it was that of Samuel Johnson himself. It is best to let Boswell give his own account of this memorable meeting.

"When Johnson lived in Castle Street, Cavendish Square, he used frequently to visit two ladies who lived opposite to him (Mr Reynolds), Miss Cotterells, daughters of Admiral Cotterell. Reynolds used also to visit there, and thus they met. Mr Reynolds, as I observed above, had, from the first reading of his *Life of Savage*, conceived a very high admiration of Johnson's powers of writing. His conversation no less delighted him, and he cultivated his acquaintance with the laudable zeal of one who was ambitious of general improvement. Sir Joshua, indeed, was lucky enough, at their very first meeting, to make a remark which was so much above the common-place style of conversation, that Johnson at once perceived that Reynolds had the habit of thinking for himself. The ladies were regretting the death of a friend, to whom they owed great obligations, upon which Reynolds observed: 'You have, however, the comfort of being relieved from the burthen of gratitude.'

"They were shocked a little at this alleviating suggestion as too selfish, but Johnson defended it in his clear and forcible manner, and was much pleased with the mind, the fair view of human nature, which it exhibited, like some of the *Reflections* of Rochefoucault. The consequence was that he went home with Reynolds, and supped with him.

"Sir Joshua told me a pleasant, characteristic anecdote of Johnson about the time of their first acquaintance When they were one evening together at Miss Cotterells', the then Duchess of Argyll and another lady of high rank came in. Johnson, thinking that the Miss Cotterells were too much engrossed by them, and that he and his friend were neglected as low company, of whom they were somewhat ashamed,

grew angry, and resolved to shock their supposed pride by making their great visitors imagine they were low indeed. He addressed himself in a loud tone to Mr Reynolds, saying: 'How much do you think you and I could get in a week if we were *to work as hard as we could?*'—as if they had been common mechanics."

Here one's first surprise is less that Dr Johnson should have undertaken to defend and develop a paradox, than that the kindly, if unemotional, Reynolds should have made himself responsible for a reflection so worldly-wise in its arid selfishness, so cheap in its cynicism. Did we seriously take this remark, so admired by Johnson, as the key-note of our master's character, we should indeed be compelled altogether to reconsider it, and to look underneath the even benignancy of the great artist and the generous man—best described by the untranslatable epithet "*serviable*"—for another and a more sinister intrepretation of a character, well understood, as we pardonably imagined, by most of us. Of the singular clumsiness and witlessness of Dr Johnson's own sally just quoted, there can hardly be two opinions. From such errors of taste Reynolds's natural amiability and innate good-breeding would always have protected him.

This is certainly not the place to estimate over again the character of the mighty lexicographer; to describe once more his lumbering, uncouth person, his strange dress and habits, his sledge-hammer onslaughts on friend and foe alike, his pleasantries, the salt and savour of which have somehow evaporated, leaving only their aggressive, their pugilistic quality behind. All this is ground a hundred occasions trodden before, and repetition of the time-worn anecdotes of Reynolds's sincere but a little patronising, friend can serve no useful purpose in the present volume. Appreciation of the great writer's

literary merits and demerits, as of his personal character, will always be, to a certain extent, a subjective matter. Some will still take Horace Walpole's depreciatory view, and speak of him as "a lumber of learning and some strong parts;" will stigmatise his manners as sordid, supercilious, and brutal, his style as pedantic, bombastic, and vicious; others with take more seriously his *rôle* as literary dictator during the greater part of the latter half of the century, and will esteem the influence exercised during that period, on men and things, a beneficent one.

One thing, however, is clear, and that is, that there must have been about the man, to neutralise and overcome the terrible drawbacks to personal intercourse with him, a magnetic force of personal influence altogether apart from the greatest of his achievements in letters, and such as none of the many who have written about him—not even the faithful and sympathetic Boswell himself—has quite adequately placed before us. Innate kindliness, making itself felt through domineering brutality, and an almost child-like craving to obtain forgiveness for injury—to heal on the spot the wounds ruthlessly inflicted—made up one side, and that the most attractive, of the big personality which imposed itself for good or for evil on all those with whom it came in contact. But even this does not fully account for the influence exercised over, and more or less willingly, as the case may be, submitted to, by almost all with whom Johnson came into permanent contact; notwithstanding that, among his friends, dependents, and admirers, there were men far more exquisitely gifted in various ways than himself, and destined to leave a far more permanent impress on art, literature, and politics. Of the part played by Johnson in developing Reynolds's literary style, in crystallising his mode of thought, in inducing, by force of example, a higher degree

of concentration, it may be necessary to say something more hereafter.

Reynolds himself, in the fragment of a supplementary Discourse that never saw the light—quoted by Malone—best describes how his personality was overshadowed by that of his famous friend and mentor when he says, speaking of the Discourses delivered at the Royal Academy :—"Whatever merit they have, must be imputed, in a great measure, to the education which I may be said to have had under Dr Johnson. I do not mean to say, though it would certainly be to the credit of these Discourses if I could say it with truth, that he contributed even a single sentiment to them ; but he qualified my mind to think justly. No man had, like him, the faculty of teaching inferior minds the art of thinking."

The great difficulty in dealing, even in the merest outline, with the biography of Reynolds, is the circumstance that his life is inextricably woven together with those of the giants—in war, in politics, in letters, in art—of his time, and that one is for ever being tempted, nay, constantly compelled, to step aside from the direct path, in order to say a word, however diffidently, about his friends and surroundings.

The master's Pocket-Books, commencing with the one for the year 1755, are the main authorities which serve to guide us with regard to the professional routine of his now busy life; to identify his sitters and patrons, his friends and associates. These are nineteen in number, commencing with 1755, and continuing, with some lacunæ—attributable, no doubt, to accidental loss and not to interruption in the painter's practice of making entries—down to 1790 ; that is, down to within two years before his death. They are headed "The Gentleman's new Memorandum Book, Improved, printed for R. and T. Dodsley, Pall Mall," and

were long in the possession of successive members of the Gwatkin family of Plymouth. They were sold at Christie's on April 28th, 1873, and bought by a Mr Pocock for twenty-eight guineas. Their final resting-place should, unquestionably, have been the British or the South Kensington Museum.

The Pocket-Books are not to be confounded with Sir Joshua's Account Book, in which were entered, in the majority of instances, the payments for pictures, both on account and final.

It is necessary to think of our painter, even at this early period, when he was but little more than thirty years of age, as suffering from deafness, brought from those glacial halls of the Vatican, the recollection of which, nevertheless, called up ever afterwards, throughout his career, a genuine thrill of enthusiasm. To bear in mind this fact, is to be even more struck than before with the unaffected charm, the unforced amiability which, overcoming such an obstacle, could, in so short a time, captivate sitters and turn them into valuable friends, forming rapidly round him the nucleus of the circle that, with many additions, and the inevitable losses occasioned by the encroachments of time, was to endure to the end of his life.

Among the *intimes* of these years time were numbered the members of the Albemarle family—including, of course, his original friend, the fiery young hero Commodore Keppel—Lord Cardigan, Lord Scarborough, his patron Lord Edgcumbe, the Bastards, the Molesworths. In Leslie and Taylor's *Life* is mentioned, as of great beauty and in fine preservation, the portrait of a Devonshire beauty, Mrs Bonfoy, daughter of the first Lord Eliot, whom he had already painted as a child in 1746, and now painted again as a woman in 1753. He would appear at this time to have kept up a more sustained

intercourse with his brother artists than later on in his career, when his social engagements became more numerous, and his leanings towards the worlds of literature, politics, and fashion more pronounced. Thus we find in the pocket-books at this time numerous engagements with Wilton, Hayman, Hudson, Ramsay, and Cotes.

Allan Ramsay, son of the author of the *Gentle Shepherd*, after a prolonged course of study in England, had settled in London, where he was now approaching the zenith of his popularity, and was shortly, on the accession to the throne of his patron, George, Prince of Wales, to be appointed Court painter—a post which he filled honourably, if not with especial brilliancy, until his death. Francis Cotes, an artist whose delicacy and distinction have not, of late years, met with quite the recognition they deserve, was just two years younger than Reynolds. He worked in pastels (French fashion) as well as in oils, and it is said that Hogarth—perhaps a not altogether unprejudiced critic in this particular case—preferred his portraits to those of our master himself, while Horace Walpole likened his pastels to those of the famous Venetian, La Rosalba.

While Reynolds, as will be seen, was, from the moment of his first definitive success, throughout his long career, the protector, the adviser, and the generous patron of artists, he never, curiously enough, counted among the friends nearest to his heart any brother painter. Whether the cause was that, in the moments when he paused from the laborious and never-ending practice of his art, he thirsted for the elegancies and amenities of social intercourse, and found, between himself and *confrères* born and bred among different surroundings, insufficient points of contact apart from the technicalities of their common art, can only be surmised.

We know that in certain instances less than cordial relations arose, either, as in the cases of Gainsborough and Barry, from incidents for which Reynolds certainly had no cause to reproach himself, or, as in that of Hogarth, from an original want of mutual sympathy and mutual comprehension. The fact, however, remains that our painter was never in those relations of friendship, or even intimate good fellowship, with any artist, which he maintained with Keppel, with Johnson, with Garrick, with Goldsmith, with Baretti, with Burke, with Gibbon, and, in later years, with Malone.

In the year 1755, a second attempt was made—a first abortive meeting of artists having been held in 1753—to evolve out of the drawing-school in St Peter's Court, Martin's Lane, an Academy of Arts to "provide for the teaching of students, and otherwise act in setting on foot a public academy for the improvement of the arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture."

The model before the artists so aspiring to enrol themselves as, and to exercise the privileges of, a corporate body was doubtless the French Academy of Painting and Sculpture, established with the sanction of the French crown in 1648, in order to repel the excessive pretensions of the *maîtrise* or guild of *peintres-ymagiers*.

The French Academy received further privileges from Cardinal Mazarin in 1655, and constituted him its protector; in 1663 obtaining from the crown a pension or allowance of 4000 livres, and in the following year having its newly-elaborated statutes and regulations confirmed by the Parliament of Paris—an event in the history of the *Académie de Peinture* generally designated as the *Grande Restauration*. It is useful to bear in mind these few facts in considering the initial struggles of our own Academy—its incubation, as it were—before it burst full-fledged upon

the astonished public and the still more astonished artists not included in its numbers. The *Académie* consisted of a protector, a vice-protector, a director, a chancellor, four rectors, *adjoints* to the rectors, a treasurer, four professors, one of whom was professor of anatomy and another of geometry; other *adjoints* and councillors, a historiographer, a secretary, and two ushers.

The first director (or, as we should say, president) of the then fully and definitively constituted *Académie* was the famous Le Brun, the representative, *par excellence*, of the Louis Quatorze style in all branches of fine and industrial art. Under his autocratic yet beneficent authority the administration of the royal galleries and collections, of the royal manufactories connected with industrial art, and of all provincial academies and schools, was concentrated under the direction of the *Académie*, and practically under the control of its director.

At this point the Dilettanti Society, a body founded in 1732 for the encouragement of studies in antiquity and the arts, steps upon the scene. In its beginnings, and, indeed, more or less throughout its duration, a fashionable exclusiveness and a conviviality marked by a certain exquisiteness were, quite as much as the promotion of art and the study of antiquity, the aims of the Dilettanti, who were thus faithful to the truest interpretation of their name.

On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that the Society has, from time to time, rendered, as it still at rarer intervals renders, valuable services to art, and more especially to archæology, by the publication of such serious works as Stuart's *Athenian Antiquities*, the *Roman Antiquities*, the *Select Specimens of Ancient Sculpture*, and T. C. Penrose's elaborate *Principles of Athenian Architecture;* to say nothing of the purchase of the

splendid Siris bronzes, given to the British Museum in 1833. It will never, however, as an authority on art, recover the prestige lost by the determined opposition which it offered to the purchase of the marbles of the Parthenon by the nation, and the extraordinary pronouncement that these were not really works of the age of Pheidias, but productions of the Græco-Roman style, dating from the first or second century A.D. Among the members of the Society were many fashionables, who counted among the friends, and were, some of them, the sitters, of Reynolds; prominent among these being the Earl of Holderness, Lord Gowran, afterwards Earl of Upper Ossory, Sir Everard Fawkener, the Marquess of Granby, Lord Eglinton, Lord Anson, Sir Charles Bunbury, Lord Euston, the Marquis of Hartington, "Dick" Edgcumbe, Captain George Edgcumbe, and "Athenian" Stuart.

One of the most important offices in connection with the Dilettanti Society was that of its painter-in-ordinary, it being the rule that every member should present his portrait, done by the Society's painter, or, as a penalty, pay "face money" from year to year, until the omission should have been made good. The then painter to the Society was Knapton, to be followed by Athenian Stuart, upon whose demise Reynolds succeeded to the agreeable duties of the office, and immortalised the chief members of the Society in the two famous portrait-groups (1778-1779), of which it will be necessary to speak at length hereafter. The artists at work on the Academy Scheme revived in 1755 made a formal communication to the Dilettanti Society in a document which Leslie believes to have been the composition of Reynolds. After some generalities on the state of art and connoisseurship in England, and

some remarks on the excessive worship of the old masters, and the corresponding depreciation of modern performances, comes the following remarkable, if rather grandiloquent, passage :—

"Whereas the whole secret lies in this ; when princes for their grandeur, or priests for their profit, have had recourse to painting, the encouragement given to the profession gave spirit to the art, and others thought it worth their while to distinguish themselves, in hopes of obtaining the like reward.

"On the contrary, those who set their hearts on making collections *only*, instead of advancing the art they profess to love, or animating the professors of it, have actually helped to create the very deficiency they complain of ; for, in order to justify the excessive prices they have been artificially induced to give for names and characters, they are insensibly led to decry and undervalue every modern performance. And as a collection alone is too often sufficient to create a tasteless connoisseur—and connoisseurs are received in the gross as the only competent judges—it will necessarily follow that it must be with a painter as with the Roman Catholic saints, who are never beatified till a hundred years after they are dead, nor canonised till after a hundred years more ; a consideration which, in the present undervalued, if not derided, state of fame or glory, cannot be esteemed a very powerful incentive. If thus a national character is a matter of any concern to individuals, and, if to be complete, it ought to be sound, consistent, and of a piece, the present neglected state of the Arts, and of painting in particular, is worthy both of attention and concern."

The abstract of the proposed charter followed the preamble just quoted, there being strong internal evidence in

the scheme propounded that the promoters had before them the rules and constitution of the French Academy just referred to. The King was to be patron. The Society was to consist of a president, vice-president, directors, fellows, and scholars ; the directors to be thirty in number, including the president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer, who were to choose the fellows ; the president to be for life, the directors to be in office for three years.

It is not a little diverting to note the conditions on which the modish Society of Dilettanti signified its approval of the project and promised their co-operation :— 1st, The president of the Academy to be always chosen from the Dilettanti Society. 2d, All the Society of Dilettanti to be members of the Academy, but only the twelve seniors present at any meeting to have votes. 3d, Any artist to be eligible as a member of the Academy ; but only twelve, to be chosen annually, to have votes.

Although the committee of artists would appear to have expressed their approval of the terms dictated by the Society in even over-civil and eager fashion, the scheme, nevertheless, came to nothing for the moment —it was, indeed, impracticable under such strange conditions—and no further trace of any such promotion of an Academy of Arts appears in the records of the Society.

Among the notabilities who, in the years 1754 and 1755, were painted by Reynolds, may be picked out Lord Holderness, Lord Anson, Lord Euston, the Earl and Countess of Kildare, Mr Philip Yorke, Mr and Mrs Molesworth of Pencarrow in Cornwall, Mr Charles Townshend, the Duke of Grafton, Sir John Ligonier, Commander-in-chief and afterwards Lord Ligonier, and the millionaire Alderman Beckford, afterwards to become famous as a demagogue and the out-and-out supporter of

Wilkes. It is to the year 1756 that belongs the first portrait of Samuel Johnson, who is represented, pen in hand, sitting at a table on which are writing materials; this Reynolds afterwards gave to Boswell, who had it engraved for his *Life of Johnson.*

To the master's kindliness of heart we owe the portrait of a youth, son of Dr Mudge, the physician, painted in or about 1758. The boy had been very anxious to be with his father on his sixteenth birthday, but had been prevented by illness, whereupon Reynolds executed and sent to the father, as a consolation for the absence of the boy himself, his counterfeit presentment peeping from behind a curtain.

At this period, popular as English art was becoming, as exercised in portraiture—considered by the age, and, indeed, by Reynolds himself, as a lower branch than monumental and so-called high art—the connoisseurship of the day still placed beyond everything English, and, above all, beyond everything modern, the productions of the Bolognese artists of the 17th century, and even the empty freezing platitudes of their followers and fellow-countrymen in Reynolds's own 18th century. It is instructive to consult on this point the letters of Horace Walpole, the typical, and, no doubt, of his class, the best dilettante connoisseur of his time, and to collate with them, as to prices, some of the sale catalogues of the time. Here we find the art of the Carracci, of Guido, Domenichino, and Albano exalted to a position of equality with the masterpieces of all time produced by the Renaissance at the great period of its climax; and, indeed, we find our painter himself, in his *Discourses*, taking much the same view of Bolognese art and, theoretically, at any rate, placing it actually on a higher level than that of the golden prime of the Venetians them-

selves. Look, too, with these indications at the admirable backgrounds to Hogarth's *Marriage à la Mode* series, as showing how the saloons of the aristocratic society of the time were covered with Bolognese pictures, with copies of Michelangelo's and Correggio's least presentable designs, with Luca Giordanos, etc. And again, look at the stinging caricature, "Taste in High Life," in which the English Juvenal of the pencil seizes the occasion afforded by an opportune commission to lash, with such grotesque effect, the empty dilettantism of the polite world. Here is enough, and more than enough, to account for the irritation of Hogarth with the worshippers, *quand même*, of second and third-rate exotic art, and to account for his only half serious pronouncements on the subject of the old masters. Enough, too, to account for the despondency of Reynolds and for the eloquent plea in support of contemporary art contained in the passages above quoted. An apposite instance of the direction in which the taste of aristocratic connoisseurs still lay, is given by Leslie and Taylor in the *Life*. At about this period—they note—the Earl of Northumberland opened his great gallery in Northumberland House, which he had adorned to his great contentment, with second-rate works on a large scale and at large prices, by Raphael Mengs and Pompeo Battoni. There had been no thought of employing an English painter or decorator in the work, from first to last.

That the formation of some sort of academy was in the air, that the want of public institutions for the authoritative teaching of the fine arts was distinctly felt at this period, is shown by the public-spirited action of the Duke of Richmond who, in 1758, erected and opened his gallery of casts in Spring Gardens under the superintendence of Wilton and Cipriani.

The gallery contained about thirty casts from the best antiques. All "settled" artists were admitted to draw or model, and students above twelve, upon a recommendation from any artist known to Mr Wilton. Wilton and Cipriani attended on Saturdays to correct the drawings and give instruction. Premiums were promised at Christmas and midsummer—two silver medals for figures and two for bas-reliefs. Here, then, was already in embryo one branch of a private academy, from which some benefit might have been expected. Unfortunately the matter seems to have been muddled, and the would-be Mæcenas apparently took insufficient pains to fulfil his promises. Going abroad to join his regiment in Germany, he left no order for the premiums to be paid, and finding, on his return, uncomplimentary notices and epigrams posted up by some Pasquin on the door, he closed the gallery in disgust, and ultimately transferred its contents to the Society of Artists, on its incorporation in 1765. Some of the casts afterwards became the property of the Royal Academy.

These years of 1757, 1758, and 1759 were practically the busiest, though, of course, not the most lucrative of our painter's life, and the extraordinary lists of sitters furnished by the Pocket-Books for these periods respectively are the best possible evidence of the unexampled vogue achieved by Reynolds at the comparatively early age of thirty-five years—at a time, that is, when his technical, as well as his mental powers had yet to attain their full development. It was an age, nevertheless, at which the radiant career of Raphael was nearly complete, which Giorgione never attained, and which that latter-day Giorgione of France, the ill-starred Watteau, but little overpassed. Van Dyck, too, was in the very zenith of his third, or English manner, at the age of thirty-five.

Some few portraits, which are to be placed within the period now dealt with, may be chosen for remark, as typical of Reynolds's style at this stage of his practice, although it is not intended to put them forth as precisely the best specimens of his art at that time. His modelling was then careful and solid—it might almost be said, sculptural—to a degree not paralleled in what may, for the sake of convenience, be styled the middle and final phases of his style. His colouring was more timid than that of the later and more florid manner—silver rather than gold. The execution of the details of costume, such as lace and filmy white draperies, still retained traces of the hardness of style which obtained before his rise, and which was to be noted, not only in the works of such painters as Hudson, but even to the last in the portraits of the great Hogarth himself, masterly as was the ease and directness with which the mighty satirist could wield the brush, when he happened to be in the pure painter-mood. Still, in many of these comparatively early works there is to be found an absence of self-consciousness, a high-bred dignity and simplicity which even the masterpieces of the epoch of maturity do not always reach.

Horace Walpole sat to our painter in 1756, and the picture, when finished, was handed over to M'Ardell for engraving, the arbiter of all the elegances characteristically fussing because the mezzotinter had told people of the print, with the perhaps not undesired result of calling further attention to it. The portrait is in the possession of the Marquis of Hertford, and an original repetition belongs to the Marquis of Lansdowne.

A charming piece of the same time is the full-length "Master Jacob Bouverie," aged seven years, now at Longford Castle, Salisbury. One of the first in the series of portraits of children, it is simpler and less *ad captandum*

than most of these, but in its unadorned *naïveté* hardly less attractive. A cleaning this year (1893) revealed the authentic signature, "1757, *J. Reynolds, pinxt*," and at the same time there was discovered on Lord Hertford's "Horace Walpole," then in the hands of the same noted picture-restorer, the practically identical signature, "*J. Reynolds, pinxit*, 1757."

In the full-length of Elizabeth Gunning, Duchess of Hamilton (and afterwards of Argyll), painted in 1758, and No. 26 in the often-to-be-cited exhibition of the Grosvenor Gallery, it is difficult to trace any of the fascination that this, the less perfectly lovely of the two lovely sisters, must have possessed, to charm into matrimony the Duke of Hamilton—tersely described by Horace Walpole as "hot, debauched, extravagant, and equally damaged in his fortune and person;" and, moreover, to have the refusal, after his death, of the Duke of Bridgwater, whose alliance she declined in favour of that of Colonel John Campbell—only a temporary sacrifice of position after all, seeing that the last-named gentleman duly matured into the Duke of Argyll.

It is surely unnecessary to repeat once more the universally known and ever-popular tales of the fabulous success which attended the "Gunning girls" on their first appearance in London in 1751—a success by the side of which the vogue of even the most brilliant among the professional beauties of this time must appear pale and insignificant. Who among these fair ones of to-day has had to submit to such pleasant mobbings in the park and at the playhouse as caused the Countess of Coventry to pretend fright, and to desire the assistance of the officers of the guard, which being accorded to her, she was, of course, more delightfully mobbed than ever? This same Countess of Coventry (Maria Gunning) sat to Reynolds

in June 1759, when she had already the seeds of death in her, and her lord also appears as a sitter, in the July of the same year.

The beautiful Elizabeth, in the full-length now in question (the property of the Duke of Hamilton, and No. 26 at the Reynolds Exhibition), is timidly depicted, with little of the modish charm, the consciousness of supreme loveliness which Reynolds, in the later days when his artistic personality was full blown, his hand freer and more conscious of its cunning, would have revelled in interpreting to the beholder. This portrait was exhibited in 1760, in the Great Room of the Society of Arts in the Adelphi — the same which, later on, was decorated with Barry's much-discussed pictures.

Reynolds is, however, all himself in the "Lady Elizabeth Keppel" (Marchioness of Tavistock), one of the sisters of his great friend, Commodore Keppel, and afterwards the adored wife of young Francis Russell, Marquis of Tavistock, who was killed by a fall from his horse while out hunting in 1767. In this half-length, painted in 1759, the young lady appears simply dressed in white, with a pink rose in her bosom—the dress and the flower painted with a measure of that timidity which has just been noted as a characteristic of this period of the artist's practice, but the face admirable in its serene and high-bred simplicity. This work, lent to the Reynolds Exhibition by the then Earl of Albemarle, has since passed into the possession of Mr E. L. Raphael, by whom it was contributed to the Royal Academy Exhibition of Old Masters in 1893.

Still finer is the "Anne, Countess of Albemarle," happily secured for the nation on the dispersal of the Keppel pictures, and now No. 1259 in the National Gallery. It should, perhaps, have been mentioned before the preceding example, seeing that it would appear to

belong to the year 1758. The mother of the Ladies Keppel, and of the heroic Commodore, is depicted in three-quarter length, seated at a table on which is a work-basket; the delicate hands with their pointed fingers are half-mechanically doing some work, while the pale, refined face, absolutely simple and absolutely thoroughbred, gazes half-abstractedly at the beholder. Here the reticence of the execution, the moderation of the colour, perfectly suit the reticence of the conception, and, of its kind, Reynolds has done nothing better than this pathetic portrait. In 1758, William, Duke of Cumberland, of Culloden memories, and Prince Edward, had sat to him, and now he first painted George, Prince of Wales, whose favour, as King George III., he never fully succeeded in securing—less lucky in this, and in this alone, than Allan Ramsay, Gainsborough, Benjamin West, Zoffany, Copley, and others among his contemporaries.

The celebrated courtesan, Kitty Fisher, whose acquisitiveness Reynolds has allusively commemorated by painting her as Danäe, while her money-spending capacities are no less delicately hinted at in the famous portrait in which she appears as "Cleopatra dissolving the Pearl," first sat to her friend and limner-in-ordinary in 1759. Our conception of that sprightly elegance and infinite variety which went some way towards redeeming her frailty—notorious even in those times when Aspasia had an all but recognised position, not exactly in, but close upon, the heels of the world, and shone at public ball and masquerade side by side with the blue-blooded beauties of the aristocracy — is just a little diminished when we learn that she was the daughter of a German stay-maker, and that her name would properly have been, and, indeed, was often spelt "Fischer."

The loveliest of the series of portraits painted by

Reynolds of the celebrated beauty is, perhaps, that in which she is depicted seated in an arm-chair, nursing a dove, while another drops down into her lap. The picture, doubtless ordered of our painter by the admirer whose medallion portrait is so ostentatiously displayed on her bosom, contains a manifest allusion to the Goddess of Love. But here the divinity looks so pure, so innocent, that it is the Urania and not the Pandemos of whom we are led to think. Original versions of this painting are, or were, in the possession of Lord Crewe, Mr Munro, and Mr Lenox of New York. The earlier picture, which was the outcome of the 1759 sittings, is probably that which is in the collection of Lord Leconfield at Petworth.

Almost the first imaginative work of importance of which we hear, is the "Venus"—mentioned in the 1759 Pocket-Book under the month of December—first of a numerous series of undraped goddesses and nymphs, manifestly the outcome of our painter's study of the glowing, realistic nudities of Venetian art. The type thus evolved is just a little tempered and conventionalised by the influence exercised over him by the Bolognese, with whom semi-nude Magdalens and saints occupied, as a result of the Catholic Revival, the place of the Venetian dames and courtesans. This particular Venus is shown reclining in a landscape, wholly undraped—her charms set off only by an armlet; Cupid gazes at her through the boughs.

Very soon after—in 1760—we find the painter depicting Miss Greville and Master Greville as Venus and Cupid.

A brief reference must be made here to the three papers contributed by Reynolds in 1759 to Dr Johnson's *Idler*—Nos. 76, 79 and 82—although these will be dealt with in a separate chapter, together with the rest of the his literary works.

Northcote tells us:—"I have heard Sir Joshua say that Johnson required them of him in a sudden emergency, and on that account he sat up the whole night to complete them in time; and by it he was so much disordered that it produced a vertigo in his head. I may here add that, at the time when he contributed to the *Idler*, he also committed to paper a variety of remarks which afterwards served him as hints for his Discourses." Here we have already, in embryo, the Reynolds of the Discourses, only, as might have been imagined, less mature and more paradoxical. Here is already to be found the overpowering theoretical admiration for Michelangelo which was the key-note of his æsthetic preferences; here are the hard-and-fast principles laid down as to the necessity for generalisation and the danger of realistic mitation, in the grand style; here is also the beginning of that theoretical depreciation of Venetian art as "the Dutch part of the Italian genius," which yet, as the painter's Venetian note-books conclusively prove, was accompanied by a profound admiration for, and a strenuous desire to imitate, its technical qualities.

It was indirectly to Hogarth's munificence towards the Foundling Hospital, and to the consequent foundation of a gallery of works of art there—with the result of making a visit to its historical treasures the most fashionable lounge in the reign of George II.—that we owe the foundation, after many changes, vicissitudes and developments of the Royal Academy, which only became a reality some years after Hogarth's death. He had in 1740 painted and presented to the institution, mainly promoted and established by the indefatigable philanthropist, Captain Coram, that famous likeness of the founder which he, the painter, some twenty years afterwards, pronounced to be the best of his single portraits; at the same time

declaring, with an outspoken frankness which was not exactly arrogance, that the popular verdict had set it above all other works of art which had subsequently found their way into the hospital. And yet, among the authors of these were Reynolds himself (with a portrait of Lord Dartmouth), Ramsay, and Cotes; to say nothing of such minor luminaries as Hudson, Shackleton, Highmore, and Wilson (as a portrait-painter).

When in December, 1746, the west wing was completed, all those artists who, following Hogarth's example, had contributed, or promised to contribute, works to the institution, were, at a general court of the hospital, elected governors, with power to meet once a year for the purpose of considering "what further ornaments could be added to the building without expense to the charity." The natural, if not precisely necessary, consequence of this arrangement was an annual dinner on the 5th of November, at which, regarding "Liberty as the Parent and Friend of the Fine Arts," the assembled painters were accustomed to commemorate the landing of William III.; using for their pious libations a fine old white-and-blue dragon china punch-bowl, generally described as Hogarth's, which is still carefully preserved in one of the cases of the Court-Room.*

The general eagerness shown to inspect the group of works thus brought together, and displayed in the gallery of the Hospital, gave a great impetus to the curiosity of the outside public in such matters, one result being the organisation of the public exhibition of pictures by living artists, opened on the 21st of April 1760 at a large room in the Strand, opposite to Beaufort Buildings, belonging to the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce. Among the notable things ex-

* *William Hogarth*, by Austin Dobson, pp. 76-77.

hibited on this occasion were Richard Wilson's "Niobe" (the best of the three versions of which is No. 110 in the National Gallery); Hayman's portrait of Garrick as Richard III.; and Roubiliac's "Shakespeare" (executed for Garrick's villa at Hampton, and bequeathed by him to the British Museum). Reynolds contributed to this display the "Elizabeth, Duchess of Hamilton" and "Lady Elizabeth Keppel," which have been recently described, besides two male portraits.

It appears convenient, while dealing with this particular branch of the subject, to anticipate matters a little, and to state shortly that a second exhibition took place in 1761 at the Society of Artists' rooms in Spring Gardens; a third in 1762 at the same place, the preface to this last being written by Dr. Johnson, of all people, who never even professed to know one end of a picture from the other, but whose name, for all that, lent an additional attractiveness to the show. The exhibitions of the Society of Arts, in the above-mentioned room in the Strand, proceeded simultaneously with those in Spring Gardens until 1764.

In 1765 the Spring Gardens Society was incorporated by Royal Charter under the name of the Society of Artists of Great Britain, with twenty-four directors, including a president, vice-president, treasurer, and secretary, to be elected annually. Among the original directors were Hayman, George Barrett, William Chambers the architect, James M'Ardell the engraver, Francis Cotes, Nathaniel Hone, George Michael Moser, Edward Rooker, Paul Sandby, Richard Wilson, and some others; but neither Reynolds, although he had contributed liberally to the exhibitions of the Society, nor Allan Ramsay. It will be seen, later on, how the Royal Academy, from the very year of its foundation, took the wind out of the

Society's sails, and by degrees reduced it to a state of inanition.

It is at this juncture—that is to say, in 1760—that Reynolds removed to the handsome house, No. 47 Leicester Fields (or, as it is now styled, Leicester Square), which was to be his definitive studio and residence until his death, and whence were to issue those masterpieces of his maturity by which he is best known to the world. To the house as it stood he added a gallery, together with painting-rooms for his pupils proper, and for his drapery-men, of whom he had already, according to Northcote, engaged several as far back as 1758, saying that no man ever acquired a fortune by the work of his own hands only.

Reynolds is stated to have given £1650 for a forty-seven years' lease of the house, and to have laid out an additional £1500 on his improvements, thus boldly but not improvidently investing all his savings, with the happy result that in three years' time he was in receipt of £6000 a year—an unprecedented sum to be earned at that period by an English artist. He had already, before making his final migration, raised his prices to twenty-five, fifty, and one hundred guineas for bust, half-length, and full-length portraits respectively.

The story related by Northcote of the splendid gilt and painted coach set up by the now celebrated painter at this particular juncture is at first not a little disconcerting, as showing an aspect of Reynolds's many-sided character which is not the one that we are most accustomed to contemplate. This imposing and not a little gaudy vehicle is described as "a chariot, on the panels of which were curiously painted the four seasons of the year in allegorical figures. The wheels were ornamented with carved foliage and gilding; the liveries also of his servants were laced with silver. . . ." These panels

were painted by Charles Catton, afterwards R.A., and esteemed the best coach-painter of the time; but our admiration and astonishment receive a slight check when we learn, from the same informant: "I have been told that it was an old chariot of a Sheriff of London, newly done up."

No doubt, in this Reynolds displayed an unexpected knowledge of the ways of the world, and a boldness in self-advertisement which would have done honour to any shoddy speculator of to-day; but all the same it pains us to think of him, the gentle, the polished, the "nature's gentleman," going about in the *réchauffé* of a Sheriff's official chariot, like some quack-doctor advertising his nostrums. Indeed, we learn without surprise that the painter, being indeed better occupied, did not overmuch make use of his gilded advertisement on wheels, but, with a refinement of cruelty which for once gave Miss Reynolds a legitimate grievance, compelled her to ride in it as much as possible, and "let it be seen in the public streets so as to make a show." That it was too fine for a painter, even of Reynolds's established vogue, and that its fineness was not altogether usual or in good taste, we may take for granted, by the hubbub it created when it passed. And the more we consider, the more we wonder!

Is it, perhaps, that the naturally reticent and refined, when, striving to overcome a constitutional aversion to outward display and the *grosse caisse* generally, they determine to assert themselves, do so with such grotesque excess of emphasis as to overshoot the mark? Or must we believe that Reynolds's gentle breeding was not the natural thing we have assumed it to be, but an artificial product matured by degrees with practice and from outside; and that at this period it was yet so little

to be depended upon as to play the genial artist such a trick as this? The former hypothesis is the one which the writer prefers, as being most in consonance with the vast body of evidence which we possess, not only as to the artistic personality of Reynolds, but as to his whole character and surroundings.

To the year 1760, the Pocket-Book for which contains the names of as many as 120 sitters, belong some of Reynolds's most solid and artistic performances, showing him already a master in virtue of distinctiveness of style and intellectual power, even though his palette may not yet have acquired all the richness, the melting tints, or the powerful chiaroscuro, to attain which he sacrificed so much in later years. The large equestrian portrait of Lord Ligonier,—now No. 143 in the National Gallery, to which it was presented by William IV. in 1836,—is certainly not, in its present state, and, indeed, can never have been, an imposing or effective work. The head of the veteran is heavily modelled and lifeless, the charger most unconvincing in its action, and the relation between man and beast a purely conventional one. To execute such a *portrait d'apparat* as this—a work of the class in which Rubens, Van Dyck, and Velasquez so greatly excelled—higher technical acquirements and firmer draughtsmanship were required than Reynolds was ever able to acquire.

An able if not a very fascinating performance of the same year is the "Rebecca, Viscountess Folkestone," in the collection at Longford Castle. This has, moreover, a superadded interest as helping to disprove the statement, almost universally made and believed, that Reynolds only signed two pictures—the lovely "Lady Cockburn with her children" recently bequeathed to the National Gallery, and the famous

"Mrs Siddons as the Tragic Muse," of both of which typical works more will be said hereafter. The "Rebecca Viscountess Folkestone" bears at the base, on the right hand, the perfectly genuine inscription—recently examined with great care by the writer—"*J. Reynolds, pinx*^{t} 1760.' This lies, half obscured by the darkness of the shadows, under successive coats of varnish, and it is highly probable that a careful examination of other works of the same period might reveal the existence of similar signatures, similarly obscured. Indeed, it has already been shown that, besides the "Boy Reading" of 1747, the "Horace Walpole" and the "Master Jacob Bouverie" of 1757 bear perfectly authentic signatures.

In the collection of the Earl of Radnor are also two other portraits of the year 1760—those of the Hon. Mary Bouverie, Countess of Shaftesbury, and her husband, Anthony, fourth Earl of Shaftesbury, in the robes worn by them at the coronation of George III. At the exhibition of 1761, in Spring Gardens, appeared also the whole-length of Captain Orme leaning on his horse, painted for Lord Inchiquin The gentleman portrayed was aide-de-camp (with Washington) to General Braddock in America during the campaign of 1755, his manuscript journal of which was presented by George IV. to the British Museum. The conception was a great innovation on the consecrated attitudes in vogue when it was painted—being derived from the Rubens - Van Dyck school, and, perhaps, suggested by the great "Charles I." now in the *Salon Carré* of the Louvre, although in the latter the charger of the dismounted king is held by a squire. Military and quasi-military portraiture of this type became afterwards very popular in the English school, prominent examples of success in the style being Reynolds's own

well-known "Marquis of Granby," and Gainsborough's incomparably spirited and charming "Colonel St Leger" at Hampton Court, the pendant to which was the like portrait of the Prince of Wales exhibited in the same year (1781) at the Royal Academy.

The intention in the "Captain Orme" is excellent, and the modelling carefully studied, but there is still something stiff and awkward about the whole; the painter does not yet wield that *pennello volante* by which Angelica Kauffmann is so much struck a few years later. Another portrait, painted in 1761, is that of "Lady Elizabeth Spencer, Countess of Pembroke," with her child (lent by the Earl of Pembroke to the Guelph Exhibition, where it was No. 137). This has been described in somewhat watery fashion as "one of the purest and sweetest portraits that even Reynolds ever painted." The Countess was one of the *beautés sages* of her time—which was, indeed, in England, one rather of racket, of noisy gaiety uninterruptedly sustained, than of secret intrigue, though the latter element was by no means wanting. Horace Walpole, writing to Montagu on September 4th, 1761, says of her: "Lady Pembroke alone, at the head of the Countesses, was the picture of majestic modesty."

But this is anticipating a little, seeing that the canvas did not appear at the 1761 Exhibition. This was memorable in more than one respect, since Hogarth, then near the close of his career, contributed the famous "Sigismunda," which was the cause, to him, of so much heartburn; the "Gate of Calais," or "Roastbeef of Old England," as it is sometimes called; the "Election Entertainment;" "The Lady's last Stake" (now the property of Mr Louis Huth, and last seen in public at the Grosvenor Gallery in the "Century of British Art" Exhibition of 1887-1888). For this picture it was the

custom of Mrs Thrale to assert that she sat when a young girl. The lady's veracity has, however, been impugned on this point, and certainly the apparent age of the beauty, here seen driven to her last entrenchments, does not accord with the extreme youth of Miss Hester Salusbury at the period when the picture was painted.

Among Reynolds's contributions was one of his masterpieces—by far the greatest and most distinctive thing done by him up to the date at which we have arrived. This is the famous portrait of Sterne, or, to give him his due styles and titles, the Rev. Laurence Sterne, which is one of our master's most widely-appreciated performances, and has been innumerable times popularised by replicas, copies, and engravings. So well known, indeed, is it, that a detailed description appears hardly necessary. Necessarily sober in its general tonality, and without *bravura*, too, in the execution, the portrait depends for its effect on the extraordinary subtlety of the conception and the felicity of the realisation. Sterne faces the spectator in dark blue gown and wig, leaning forward, propped up on his right hand and arm; the wig has managed to get itself a little awry on the curiously-shaped head, and, say Leslie and Taylor, "the painter, with that readiness in taking advantage of accident to which we owe so many of the delightful novelties in his works, painted it so, for he must have known that a mitre would not sit long, bishop-fashion, on the head before him, and it is surprising what a Shandean air this venial impropriety of the wig gives to its owner."

Reynolds has here conjured up before us, not the mere physical presence, but the very personality of the rare humourist who gave to the world *Tristram Shandy* and *The Sentimental Journey*, and not the least of whose distinctions is, that he was in some (happily not in all)

respects a precursor of Thackeray. In this ugly and not over trustworthy countenance the sympathetic element is far from being wholly absent; the humour, the sentimentality, sadly lacking fresh air and true eighteenth-century in quality, the latent pruriency appertaining to the man's peculiar temperament, are all here, and nothing is over accentuated. Sterne, in a letter to a friend, says:—"You must mention the business to Reynolds yourself; for I will tell you why I cannot. He has already painted a very excellent portrait of me, which, when I went to pay him for, he desired me to accept as a tribute (to use his own elegant and flattering expression) that his heart wished to pay to my genius": with the further delightfully naive corollary—"That man's way of thinking and manners are at least equal to his pencil." About the veracity of this last assertion, Tom Taylor appears, however, to have some doubts, and it certainly coincides but little with what we know of the painter's practice in this particular, even with friends to whom he was knit by much closer bonds of amity than ever existed between him and Sterne.

This portrait was painted for Lord Ossory, then passed to Lord Holland, and, on his death, was purchased by the Marquis of Lansdowne, at whose residence in Berkeley Square it now is. It was lent by its owner to the Guelph Exhibition at the New Gallery in 1791.

Reynolds's other contributions to the exhibition were the equestrian portrait of Lord Ligonier; that of Captain Orme; a whole-length of the Duke of Beaufort; and the lovely profile half-length of the Countess Waldegrave, wearing a gauze turban, which has been rendered popular by James M'Ardell's mezzotint. There had already been painted, in 1759, a whole-length of this lady (the natural daughter of Sir Edward Walpole), in peeress's

robes. This was lent by Earl Waldegrave to the Reynolds Exhibition, where it was No. 152; the half-length now in question being contributed on the same occasion by its owner, Lord Carlingford (No. 136). Another delightful portrait of this most faithful of Reynolds's sitters, which it may be convenient to mention here, though a little out of its right place, is the "Countess Waldegrave with her daughter, Lady Elizabeth Laura," painted in 1761-1762, and exhibited in the latter year as "Dido embracing Cupid"; it is evidently suggested by some Italian "Madonna and Child." This canvas was bequeathed by the late Countess Waldegrave to the Duc d'Aumale, and is now in the château of the latter at Chantilly.

It will perhaps not be inopportune to put forward here an expression of individual opinion which may possibly a little shock and surprise those who look upon Reynolds chiefly as the supreme painter of female loveliness, whether found in the whole or the half world of his time, or in that debateable land between the two, which was the stage. It is quite possible to be amused by the absurdity of Horace Walpole's paradox—contained in the well-known parallel between our painter and Allan Ramsay—that "Mr Reynolds seldom succeeds in women: Mr Ramsay is formed to paint them;" and yet, to perceive that where Reynolds approached nearest to greatness, and showed a measure of that much-abused word genius, was in the presentment of the great *men* who were his friends, and for observing whom, in every phase and every mood, he had all through his career opportunities unequalled by those afforded to any artist of his time. The Reynolds of whom we are all proud, but, above all, the Reynolds whom the collector worships and will make any sacrifice

to possess, is he to whom we owe such splendid and, in the higher sense, decorative portraits, as, for instance, the "Mrs Bouverie with her child," the "Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire," the "Ladies Waldegrave," the "Lady Cockburn with her Children."

There is, however, a Reynolds belonging to an even higher category of art than this consummate master of the brush, this almost too bland and placid delineator of fashionable beauty and charm, appreciable by all beholders. This is the Reynolds to whom we owe the "Sterne," and the realistic yet noble "Dr Johnson" (Streatham version), and the audaciously faithful "Gibbon," and the "Baretti," and the "John Hunter," and so many other masterpieces in which the artist grapples with, and makes his own, the strongest and most distinctive personalities of his time. True, the artist himself disclaimed the intention of diving into the inner consciousness and seeking for the complete idiosyncrasy of his sitters, when he said—in reply to a critic complimenting him on the perfect individuality, combined with typical truth, to be noted in his pathetic portrait of the venerable Joshua Sharpe (painted in 1785)—that he had no merit in the matter, as his task had only been to make an exact copy of the attitude in which the old man had placed himself at the time of sitting. "As he was remarkably still," he went on, "it became a matter of no more difficulty than copying a barn, or any object of still-life."

In like manner Houdon, the greatest portrait-sculptor of the eighteenth century, the author of the immortal "Voltaire" at the Comédie Française, and the artist to whom sat Diderot, Rousseau, Franklin, Washington, Mirabeau, Gluck—names that Reynolds himself can hardly parallel —repudiated a similar panegyric passed upon him by an admiring critic (somewhat unfortunately in the instance

selected, seeing that the bust was one of Molière, made up from contemporary portraits); professing to seek only for a perfect, plastic rendering of what he saw naturally expressed in the faces of his sitters.

His words are worth quoting:—

"In executing the bust of Molière I had no other object in view than . . . just to do the portrait of Molière. If everyone has recognised it, that is very flattering to me, and proves that I have well reproduced the model which I had under my eyes. But I had no intention of presenting the *Père de la Comédie* (as you say). If all the world considers the bust like, if my brother artists judge it to be well done, then I must feel very vain. But if it should be held that in the eyes, in the general air of the figure, it is patent that it is he who wrote *Tartuffe*, *Le Misanthrope*, and *Les Femmes Savantes*, then I feel bound to assure you that I was not aware of it. I accept the praise of the likeness and the workmanship; but indeed I cannot swallow the praise of the intentions which you attribute to me."

Strangely enough, another great portraitist of the eighteenth century, Maurice-Quentin de la Tour—the most popular and the most successful of all with his contemporaries, although pastels, and not oils, were his medium — arrogated to himself this unique power of penetrating into the very souls of his sitters, which was the one quality for which his sprightly, brilliant, and thoroughly living art was least distinguished.

All this is, however, by no means conclusive; and if we may not without ridicule interpret a poet against his will, we may certainly be permitted to see more (or, as the case may be, less) in the art of a painter than

he, living on too close terms with his work to judge it objectively, is altogether conscious of. The power of realising an individuality—of suggesting its permanent traits, not less moral than physical, without stepping outside the legitimate limits of portraiture—need not necessarily be exercised with conscious deliberation, but may quite conceivably be intuitive. If this be so, may we not continue to admire in the painter of the "Garrick," the "Sterne," the "Gibbon," and in the sculptor of the "Voltaire," the "Mirabeau," the "Gluck," those very powers of penetrating below the epidermis, of evolving an individuality from a sitter, which they have appeared so anxious to disclaim?

CHAPTER III

Marriage of the King, and Coronation Portraits—"Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy"—Other Portraits of Garrick by Reynolds and Gainsborough—Ramsay appointed Painter to the King—Tour in West of England with Dr Johnson—Northcote for the first time meets Reynolds—Exhibition of 1764—"The Club" established—Johnson's Letter to Reynolds on his Illness—Carle Van Loo—Oliver Goldsmith—Edmund Burke—Exhibition of 1765—Lady Sarah Bunbury sacrificing to the Graces—Mythological and Allegorical Portraiture—Intimacy with Wilkes—Angelica Kauffmann—Her Career and Relation to Reynolds—Unfortunate Marriage with Horn—Reynolds accused Abroad of Complicity in Plot—Absurdity of the Accusation shown.

THE marriage and coronation of young King George, which took place respectively on the 2d and 22d September 1761, gave much occupation to Reynolds as the most fashionable master of the hour, and one, too, who at that point had no serious rivals in his particular line. Lady Elizabeth Keppel, whose simple, reposeful half-length has already been described, was portrayed in all the splendours of her royal bridesmaid's costume, gleaming with white satin and silver, in the act of adorning the obligatory statue of Hymen with heavy wreaths of flowers, which are being handed to her by a negress. This mode of treatment, minus the conventional piece of pseudo-classicism peculiar to the last half of the eighteenth century, is manifestly adapted from Van Dyck,

who, more than once, in full-lengths of high-born dames dressed in satin of silvery sheen, has heightened, by the introduction of a negro boy holding flowers, the delicacy of his tints, and the refinement of his sitters. This full-dress and essentially decorative presentment of the ill-fated Marchioness of Tavistock — as she afterwards became — is in the collection of the Duke of Bedford at Woburn Abbey.

Two other youthful beauties among the royal bridesmaids—Lady Caroline Russell and Lady Sarah Lenox (later on again to be presented by the artist as Lady Sarah Bunbury)—were also painted. There was begun in this year the quasi-dramatic group of portraits at Holland House* (collection of the Earl of Ilchester), showing Lady Sarah Lenox leaning from a low window in the Jacobean mansion to take from the hands of Lady Susan Strangways a dove which the latter holds out to her, while the youthful Charles James Fox, with a paper in his hand, urges his cousins to come in to a rehearsal of *Jane Shore.* Notwithstanding its undoubted freshness and charm, the picture is not exempt from a certain *minauderie*, to which Reynolds was often to succumb, especially in his portraits of youthful persons and children ; and, moreover, the difficulty of combining portraiture with definite dramatic action has not been completely solved. The picture is evidently intended to commemorate the amateur performance of *Jane Shore* by a company of girls and children, including, as its chief performers, the young people here portrayed, of which Horace Walpole writes with enthusiasm to George Montagu on January 22d, 1761, especially praising the beauty and ingenuousness of Lady Sarah in the title part.

* Shown at the Royal Academy Exhibition of Old Masters in 1871.

A beautiful and exceptional portrait-study belonging to this period, about which too little has been written and said, is the "Miss Jacobs," which has been seen both at the Old Masters, and at the Guildhall in 1890; being, on the latter occasion, wrongly catalogued as belonging to the year 1791 (in lieu of 1761). The lady, a lovely and ingenuous blonde, who is supposed to have been a singer, appears seated, dressed entirely in pale, sheeny blue, with a single row of pearls as a necklace, and in her lap a delicate bouquet of flowers, just discreetly giving the requisite fillip to the colour-scheme. Here Reynolds has himself successfully infringed his subsequently-enunciated precept, contained in the eighth Discourse to the students of the Royal Academy, delivered December 10th, 1778, and thus worded:—

"It ought, in my opinion, to be indispensably observed that the masses of light in a picture be always of a warm, mellow colour; yellow, red, or a yellowish-white; and that the blue, the grey, or the green colours be kept entirely out of these masses, and be used only to support and set off these warm colours."

It has been very generally, and on the whole with a great preponderance of probability, assumed that it was to combat or defy this precept that Gainsborough's famous "Blue Boy" was produced; but a little doubt exists about the chronology of this masterpiece, which may, according to some, though not the better, authorities, have been in existence several years before the Discourse was delivered. Should this be assumed to be the case, the usually accepted order would have to be reversed, and we should be compelled, unless we would spoil the legend altogether, to assume that the Discourse was

C. J. Fox with Lady L. Bunbury and Lady L. Strangways

delivered as a protest against the painting. The "Blue Boy" is, however, by no means the only instance in which Gainsborough has risen superior to masses of blue in the high lights of a picture. In the "Miss Jacobs" the problem is frankly attacked, the blue not being unduly warmed or heightened by artifices, but helped by the delicate, subtly-flushed flesh-tints, the genuine blonde colour of the hair, and the not too obtrusive flowers in the lady's lap. The portrait has been variously described as "A Lady Unknown" (in Roydell's catalogue of prints, which includes J. Spilbury's print after it), and as "The Blue Lady."

The exhibition of 1762 at the Society of Artists' rooms in Spring Gardens—the second there, and third of the entire series—was to the full as memorable as its immediate predecessor. Admission was this time a shilling at the door, and an additional sixpence for the catalogue, with its preface written by Dr Johnson. A well-meant but slightly Utopian feature of the scheme was, that the works sent in by artists were to be reviewed by the committee conducting the exhibition; a price to be secretly set on every piece and registered by the secretary. If the piece should be sold for more, the whole price to be the artist's; but if the purchasers should value it at less than the committee, the artist to be paid the deficiency from the profits of the exhibition. It was at this exhibition that Gainsborough, newly established at Bath, where he already occupied a position similar to that achieved by Reynolds in London, made a second appearance with a "Portrait of Mr Poyntz," described in the catalogue as "a whole-length of a Gentleman with a Gun." Garrick, the willing prey of all portrait-painters, is depicted by Zoffany in the "Farmer's Return," while

M'Ardell and Fisher exhibit mezzotints after Reynolds. The master's own contributions, three in number, are of high importance:—The full-length of Lady Elizabeth Keppel as one of the Queen's Bridesmaids, which has just been described; the fair Maria, Countess Waldegrave, as "Dido embracing Cupid" (the Duc d'Aumale's picture already described); the ever-popular "Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy."

The greatest and most versatile English actor of the age had been first painted by Reynolds in 1759, but this celebrated performance was the first authoritative presentment of the mobile physiognomy, lighted up by the kindly, yet almost painfully penetrating, glance which all the limners of the tragi-comedian have made the salient feature of their portraits. Reynolds, though he painted his friend many times more, has hardly surpassed this rendering, taken apart from its insipid accompaniments; unless it be in the half-length "Garrick as Kitely," painted in 1768, and now in the royal collection at Windsor Castle. In this work, the actor appears in a Van Dyck dress, not absolutely inappropriate, or more than a little anachronistic, seeing that the character portrayed is that in Ben Jonson's "Every Man in his Humour." The last-named canvas has much darkened, but the facial expression still appears of exceeding truth and subtlety. In the "Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy," while the main figure is masterly, the Tragedy and Comedy appear rather too much like the rival charmers who, in the *Beggar's Opera*, compete for the affections of Captain Macheath. It has been claimed for the picture that it is not only Reynolds's finest Garrick, but the finest of all the innumerable canvases in which he is depicted, whether on or off the stage. Certainly neither the smirk-

ing, uxorious Garrick in Hogarth's double portrait, "David Garrick and Eva Maria Violetti his Wife," belonging to Her Majesty the Queen, nor the undoubtedly earnest but terribly forced and grimacing figure in the famous "Garrick as Richard III.," painted in 1746 by the same master (now the property of the Earl of Feversham), can compete with it. If it were possible to put aside the far from convincing and, indeed, not a little grotesque attendant figures, and the undignified attitude of the great histrion between the two, it would not be difficult to accede to the claim for supremacy among its fellows put forward by the biographers of the master, did one not bear in mind the great full-length painted by Gainsborough, and first shown at Spring Gardens in 1766 (No. 7 at the Gainsborough Exhibition of 1885 at the Grosvenor Gallery, to which it was lent by the Corporation of Stratford-on-Avon).

In this last canvas, Garrick is portrayed, in a favourite haunt of his villa at Hampton, leaning against a pedestal surmounted by a bust of Shakespeare. It is difficult for those who have once seen this typical Gainsborough to forget the piercing glance, the unconquerable vivacity which he has found means to express, even while leaving to his hero an attitude of complete respose. It is true that it is the vitality rather than the permanent characterisation of the face which has been most completely given, but then this is, after all, the most essential characteristic of the flexible, ever-changing physiognomy. Here we have a perfect realisation of Grimm's description of Garrick, in the *Correspondance avec Diderot*, as "of middle height, inclined to be little, of agreeable and spirituel features, and with a prodigious play of eye." Not less irresistibly suggested, too, is the peculiar temperament which caused

George III. to say, with that prosaic good sense which was not infrequently akin to sound criticism: "He never could stand still; he was a great fidget." Fulcher, in his *Life of Gainsborough*, has told the following anecdote—*ben trovato*, it may well be, rather than *vero*—as to Garrick sitting to Reynolds's great rival:—"Gainsborough, it has been said, was unable to catch Garrick's likeness by reason of the constant change in the expression of the artist's countenance, now squinting like Wilkes, and now appearing handsome as Lord Townshend; anon his cheeks were dilated and he puffed and gasped like the leviathan Johnson, and then his features wore the pinched aspect of Sir John Hawkins's, so that the baffled painter was compelled to throw down his brush in despair." Allan Cunningham gives the same version of the story, with the addition that the painter dashed his brushes on the floor, exclaiming, in a passion, that he believed he was painting "from a devil rather than a man."

Notwithstanding this testimony, it is by no means certain, or even probable, that Gainsborough, of all the artists who sought the honour of reproducing Garrick's features, was the one meant; since Northcote, who professes to have heard the actor himself relate the story to Reynolds, makes him speak of an indifferent painter to whom he was sitting—a description which Gainsborough's intimate friend Garrick would never have dreamt of applying to him, and which Reynolds, just and generous, if without warmth of enthusiasm, would never have permitted to be so applied. Either the tale applies to another and a far inferior painter among the many who depicted the "Richard III.," the "Macbeth," the "Kitely," the "Abel Drugger," or the civilian taking his *otium cum dignitate* in his suburban retreat; or else it has been exaggerated and dis-

torted beyond recognition. The latter is the supposition which should most recommend itself, when it is remembered that Garrick could never completely put off the histrion and the mimic; that even the howls of a negro page-boy, convulsed with delight at the facial distortions executed for his especial delectation by the brightest luminary of the British stage, were to him sweet incense, and an adequate reward. At any rate, Garrick thought so highly of Gainsborough's great full-length that he presented it to the Corporation of Stratford-on-Avon, and we know that Mrs Garrick spoke of it as "the best portrait ever painted of her Davy."

Reynolds's "Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy," formerly at Knole, has passed into the possession of Lord Rothschild, whose residence in Piccadilly it now adorns.

The master, we are told by Northcote, purposed to paint a picture of Garrick in his own proper habit, surrounded by groups of figures representing him in all the different characters by personifying which he had gained fame on the stage. The pupil opines that the attempt might have ended in failure, and many, even of our master's most fervent admirers, will be found to echo that opinion. To combine without monotony or grotesque absurdity such a series of "doubles" as is here indicated, would have required all the dramatic power, the humour, the audacity of Hogarth. The brush best suited to carry out the notion on a large scale would have been, not that of Reynolds but of Gainsborough.

There is nothing especially to show that Reynolds aspired at this moment to the vacant post of King's painter, or that he felt any annoyance at the appointment of his friend, or at any rate, friendly acquaintance, Allan Ramsay. The Scotchman was backed up by the

resistless influence of his friend and fellow-countryman, Lord Bute, and was indeed a fair painter, in many respects a good man for the place—by no means so exalted a one, either as regards its emoluments or the status which it conferred, as might to-day be imagined.

Reynolds's dictum as to his brother portrait-painter is well known:—There's Ramsay, a *very* sensible man, but he is *not* a good painter." Our master could not, indeed, have had very serious hopes of the post at this moment, seeing that he was already the friend of Wilkes—his pocket-book containing the significant entry for Saturday, November 13th 1862: "With the Beefsteak Club at Mr Wilkes's." This would account for the laudation of our master by Wilkes's supporter, Churchill, in that war of the pungent pencil, wielded by Hogarth, with the poisoned pen which was the weapon of Churchill. We have the *North Briton* (No. 17) characterising Hogarth as "sunk to a level with the miserable tribe of party etchers;" then the painter's famous portrait of "Wilkes as a Patriot;" then Churchill's castigation of his opponent in the "Epistle to William Hogarth," with these lines:—

> "The greatest genius to this fate may bow,
> Reynolds in time may be like Hogarth now."

Then Hogarth's unsuccessful, because too furious, caricature of Churchill as a bear.

Just about this time, too, Lord Bute conferred the King's pension of three hundred pounds a year upon Dr Johnson, ostensibly, at any rate, for literary merit only, "without any stipulation whatever, or even tacit understanding that he should write for the administration." Boswell's account of the transaction may be here quoted, because it shows what importance the arrogant

writer attached to his much younger friend's opinion, even on so delicate a point of literary honour as this one :—

"Sir Joshua Reynolds told me that Johnson called on him after his Majesty's intention had been notified to him, and said he wished to consult his friends as to the propriety of his accepting this mark of the royal favour, after the definitions which he had given in his *Dictionary* of *pension* and *pensioners*. He said he should not have Sir Joshua's answer till next day, when he would call again, and desired he might think of it. Sir Joshua answered that he was clear to give his opinion then, that there could be no objection to his receiving from the King a reward for literary merit, and that certainly the definitions in his *Dictionary* were not applicable to him. Johnson, it should seem, was satisfied, for he did not call again till he had accepted the pension, and had waited on Lord Bute to thank him. He then told Sir Joshua that Lord Bute said to him expressly, 'It is not given you for anything you are to do, but for what you have done.'"

In August 1762, Reynolds, for the benefit of his health, paid a visit to his native county, Devonshire, in which he was accompanied by Dr Johnson, on this occasion merry and gambolling as an elephant. Several of the finest country seats in the west of England were visited, including Wilton House and Longford Castle—not then what it afterwards became, a temple of the art of Reynolds himself—and Plymouth was reached on August 29th. Plympton, the painter's native place, was, of course, revisited, and the return to London did not take place until September 26th. Northcote's *Life* contains an amusing anecdote, in connection with this tour, illustrating Dr Johnson's

pastoral tastes in food, and unlimited capacity of deglutition. He is represented as having swallowed in conjunction such portentous quantities of new honey and clouted cream, washed down by new cider, that his host, a courteous Devonshire gentleman, became terribly alarmed for the health of his famous guest, and remained torn between his desire to interfere ere it should be too late, and the fear lest he should appear to infringe the sacred duties of hospitality.

It was on this occasion that young Northcote, who had never been out of his native county, and was then an apprentice to his father's business of watchmaking, first saw and came into contact with his already celebrated countryman.

"It was about this time," he says, "that I first saw Sir Joshua, but I had seen several of his works, which were in Plymouth, and those pictures filled me with wonder and delight, although I was then very young, insomuch that I remember, when Reynolds was pointed out to me at a public meeting, where a great crowd was assembled, I got as near to him as I could, from the pressure of the people, to touch the skirt of his coat, which I did with great satisfaction to my mind."

It is about this time that Reynolds still further increased the number of his pupils and drapery-painters —the latter a distinct class, and by no means to be confounded with the former. His first pupil after the Roman model Marchi was Beech, a native of Dorset; then we have Berridge, a Lincolnshire man; then Hugh Barron.

It was in 1763, just before the sitter's final retirement into private life, that Reynolds painted the great full-length which shows the Earl of Bute, in a suit of blue velvet,

richly laced with gold, receiving papers from his under-secretary, Charles Jenkinson, afterwards first Earl of Liverpool. It would appear, from a note supplied by Tom Taylor, that the King paid for this sumptuous portrait of the Court favourite. A small study for this picture was contributed by the Earl of Wharncliffe to the Reynolds Exhibition, whither the same owner sent also another sketch—that for the full-length in his own collection of the same personage, which was at the National Portrait Exhibition in 1867.

To the Spring Gardens Exhibition of 1763 Reynolds sent four examples of his art as a portrait-painter:—"The Ladies Henrietta and Elizabeth Montagu, Daughters of the Earl of Cardigan" (lent to the Old Masters by the Duke of Buccleugh in 1875); a half-length "John, Earl of Rothes" (lent to the Reynolds Exhibition by the Countess of Rothes); a three-quarters of "A Gentleman;" a half-length of "Nelly O'Brien," the fascinating *hetaira* who rivalled Kitty Fisher in beauty and vivacity, as well as in the impartiality with which she distributed her favours among persons of quality. It is difficult to decide whether this is indeed the famous "Nelly O'Brien" of the Wallace (once Hertford) Collection, or, as appears more probable, one of the less known portraits. In the often-reproduced picture at Manchester House, the light-hearted beauty appears completely fronting the spectator, gazing dreamily out of the canvas, as she toys with a pet spaniel. She wears a gown consisting of an under-skirt of quilted pink silk covered with lace, an over-dress of flowered brocade, and a flat Woffington hat, which, half overshadowing her face, renders it still more fascinating by the curious play of light and shadow introduced, as a half-discovered land is superior in interest to that which is entirely laid bare.

The visits of the fair Nelly to Reynolds's studio were so frequent during these years, so much in excess of the usual number allowed for sittings, as to lead the biographers to the surmise that both she, and, for similar reasons, Kitty Fisher, posed to their painter-in-ordinary, not only as sitters in the ordinary acceptation of the word, but for the necks, busts, hands, and arms of his portraits, as well as for his nymphs and Venuses—a somewhat gratuitous assumption, it may be held, and one in support of which they adduce no other evidence than the frequency of these visits. That Nelly was at any rate an especial favourite is evidenced by such appointments noted in the Pocket-Book for 1762 as this: "With Miss Nelly O'Brien in Pall Mall, next door this side the Star and Garter;" and the jocose reference to her in the list of sitters for May 1762 as "My Lady O'Brien."

Still, Joshua Reynolds was, it is clear, of a temperament against the imperturbable placidity, not to say the frigidity, of which even the dangerous shafts of these famous ladies, discharged in vain, must have fallen blunted to the ground. It is easy to credit the story that, when much later on, Mr Smelt, the decorous subgovernor of the young princes, expressed to him his wonder how he could resist the allurements of the beauty which daily exhibited itself in his painting-room, with all the enhancement of costume and attitude, he replied that his heart, like the grave-digger's hand in Hamlet, had grown callous by contact with beauty.

He was, indeed, as tepid in his bland, deferential courtesy towards women, as chilly in his evenly-diffused kindliness, as winter sunshine; we should perhaps like him even better could we pick but one little hole in his armour of proof.

The Pocket-Book for 1763 is not forthcoming, but in

the fly-leaf of that for 1764 (as quoted by Leslie and Taylor) we find the following enhanced prices given :—

The whole-length, 7 ft. 10 in. by 4 ft. 10 in.,	150	guineas—	75
The half-length, 4 ft. 2 in. by 3 ft. 4 in., -	70	„	35
The Kit-Kat, 3 ft. by 2 ft. 4 in., - -	50	„	25
* The 3-quarter, 2 ft. 6 in. by 2 ft. 1 in., -	35	„	17½
The *teller de teste* (*tela di testa* on canvas including the head only), 2 ft. ½ in. by 1 ft. 6½ in. - - - - -	30	„	15

The second column of figures represents the deposit of one half the price which Reynolds—the first, it is said, to introduce the practice—caused his sitters to pay down in advance.

It is in this year that the famous Mrs Abington, the typical Thalia of the English stage as Mrs Siddons afterwards became its typical Melpomene, first appears in the Pocket-Book, taking her place in a list which comprises the highest dignitaries of the church, and the most distinguished personages of the political world, the army, the stage, and the *monde galant*, to occupy a brilliant position, in which last was, at that time, almost to possess an avowable *état.* Mrs Abington was originally called—by what christening appeareth not—Fanny, or Frances Barton, and earned as a flower-seller her nickname of "Nosegay Fan." She was the incomparable "Beatrice" in *Much Ado about Nothing*, "Miss Prue" in Congreve's *Love for Love*, "Roxalana" in *The Sultan ;* the original and inimitable "Lady Teazle" in the production of the *School for Scandal*, in 1777 ; the rebellious lady who, at the last moment, threw up the part especially written for her in Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer ;* and the unsuc-

* Meaning here, of course, the three-quarter aspect, and not the three-quarter-length.

cessful "Ophelia" whom, when she played the part with Garrick, some wag likened to "a mackerel on a gravel walk."

The Comic Muse must, however, have had refinement as well as *verve*, and that peculiar power of self-education, in matters of breeding and outward conformity to usage, which a woman acquires so much more easily than a man. Her taste in dress was as sure as it was original, and she actually led the fashion in this particular, giving her name to several among the most fashionable feminine adornments, and among them to the "Abington Cap."

Her modish supremacy is paralleled by that achieved some years later, both in Paris and London, by the famous Terpsichore of the *Grand Opéra*, Mlle. Guimard, a lady of an incomparable lightness of foot, well-matched by her morals, or lack of them. This lady describes herself in her correspondence as besieged, almost at the moment of her arrival in London, to fulfil an engagement there, by emissaries from English *grandes dames*, entreating her criticism and approval of their toilettes.

Mrs Abington managed to conquer for herself, notwithstanding her origin and antecedents, a pleasant place, not exactly in, but by the side of the great world. Invitations to her supper and card parties were coveted things, and some ladies as well as men of quality were not above accepting them. The faithful Boswell describes Johnson himself as "a little vain of the solicitations of this elegant and accomplished actress," and when the great man, supping with Mrs Abington, meets certain persons of high fashion, owns him "much pleased with having made one in so elegant a circle." At Streatham, too, Johnson, evidently not averse from recording his social acquaintance with the fashionable actress, teases Mrs Thrale with, "Mrs Abington's jelly, my dear lady, is better than yours."

Reynolds painted her at least five times:—As the "Comic Muse," in 1764 (Old Masters in 1873), and again in 1771, as "Miss Prue" in *Love for Love;* in ordinary costume with a satin cardinal cape (Old Masters in 1883) —probably the portrait of 1774; as "Lady Teazle;" and, in 1782, as "Roxalana" putting aside a curtain, which rare example of the Reynolds vivacity was the picture presented to her by the painter, and the undue detention of which, by Sherwin the engraver, she pathetically laments.

As the "Comic Muse" (now or lately at Knole) the lady is shown in full-length, dressed in a flowered gown of contemporary fashion, with the mask of Comedy in her hand, and her face lighted up with a perfectly realised expression of sly humour and *espièglerie.*

By far the best of the series, however, and one of the masterpieces of the painter, is the "Miss Prue" (formerly at Saltram, and No. 7 at the Reynolds Exhibition of the Grosvenor Gallery, to which it was contributed by Sir Chas. Mills). Here is one of the rare dramatic portraits of the finest quality—dramatic not only because a character in a comedy has been selected as the suggesting motive, but dramatic also in essence. In it Reynolds has achieved a surprising success, combining the charm of his famed "momentariness" with the essentials of permanent characterisation. Miss Prue is depicted at the moment when, in Act III., scene 1, of Congreve's comedy, she is compelled to receive the unwillingly-offered attentions of her loutish sailor-lover, Ben, and at his approach exclaims:—"You need not sit so near; if you have anything to say, I can hear you further off; I arn't deaf." Pouting, she leans her arms on the back of her chair, with her thumb at her lips. There is a happy audacity and perfect fitness in the conception, to which Reynolds has lent his own tone of good company, while infusing into

it a certain charming *mutinerie* which is Mrs Abington's rather than Miss Prue's, and yet preserving the hoydenish awkwardness of manner required by the subject. The canvas was in the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1771, and should perhaps more properly have been described later on. It is clear, bright, and in fine condition, and is executed with a masterly completeness which leaves little or nothing to be desired, though not with the melting autumn tints that the Sir Joshua of later years strove at all risks to attain.

This *mutinerie* and charm, by the way, which made the fair actress's society so captivating to her friends, could be a mutinous spirit of opposition and very devilry in her dealings with her manager, Garrick, whom, by her vagaries, she aggravated to the verge of madness; asserting all the while—with what amount of truth it is at this period difficult to say—that she had grave causes of complaint, in respect of his conduct towards her.

To the Spring Gardens Exhibition of this year, Reynolds contributed a whole-length of Lady Sarah Bunbury (born Lenox)—described in the catalogue, with a commendable reticence which has to-day become obsolete, as "A Lady"—and a three-quarters length of the fair Countess-Dowager of Waldegrave, in mourning for the still recent death of her husband.

It was in the early part of 1764, according to Boswell and Malone, that was founded the famous Literary Club, as it has almost universally been called; although it never officially arrogated to itself this title, being content with the simplicity, in a sense more arrogant still, of The Club. Forster, in his *Life and Times of Oliver Goldsmith*, gives the date of the foundation, however, as "unquestionably 1783," going on, however, to state that the meetings not did begin until the winter. However this may be, the

initiative, as proposer and founder of The Club, belongs as of right to Reynolds, who first broached the subject to Dr Johnson. "Reynolds was its Romulus," says Mrs Thrale, attributing the remark to Dr Johnson, whom it does not appear to fit particularly well, seeing that he would not be very ready to attribute so preponderant a position in the transaction to anyone other than himself—not even to his beloved Reynolds. The original scheme, says Malone, was that it should consist of only twelve members, and that they should be men of such talents, and so well known to each other, that any two of them, if they should not happen to be joined by more, might be good company to each other. It will be noticed that, while talent and social charm were presupposed as necessary qualifications of the members, the professional literary element was by no means a *sine quâ non.*

The most notable of the original members were Reynolds himself, Dr Johnson, Edmund Burke, Dr Nugent, Bennet Langton, Oliver Goldsmith, The Hon. Topham Beauclerk, and Sir John Hawkins. The latter —for whom Johnson coined the inspired epithet "unclubable"—having one evening made an unmannerly attack on Burke, was, on his re-appearance, received with such marked coldness that he took the hint, and did not again frequent the meetings of The Club. The original arrangement was that it should meet once a week for supper at the "Turk's Head" in Gerrard Street; but about the year 1778, instead of supping together once a week, the members resolved to dine together once a fortnight during the parliamentary session. The Club was afterwards increased to thirty-five members, with a maximum limit of forty, and on that footing has ever since continued, and, indeed, lives on, if it cannot be exactly said to flourish, in the present day. Sir John Hawkins, in a

Life of Johnson, gives the following account of the manner in which The Club obtained its popular designation :—

"A lady, distinguished by her beauty and taste in literature (Mrs Montagu, Queen of the Blue Stockings), invited us two successive years to a dinner at her house. Curiosity was her motive, and possibly the desire of intermingling with our conversation the charm of her own. She affected to consider us a set of literary men, and perhaps gave the first occasion for distinguishing the society by the name of the *Literary Club*, a distinction which it never assumed to itself."

In the summer of 1764, Reynolds had a severe and even dangerous fit of illness, which called forth from Johnson the following letter, showing to the full, beneath the formality of the wording, that affectionate regard, that high conception of friendship, which are, perhaps, the noblest elements in his character :—

"DEAR SIR,—I did not hear of your sickness until I heard likewise of your recovery, and therefore escape that part of your pain which every man must feel, to whom you are known as you are known to me.

"Having had no particular account of your disorder, I know not in what state it has left you. If the amusement of my company can exhilarate the languor of a slow recovery, I will not delay a day to come to you; for I know not how I can so effectually promote my own pleasure as by pleasing you, or my own interest, as by preserving you; in whom, if I should lose you, I should lose almost the only man whom I call a friend. Pray let me hear of you from yourself, or from dear Miss Reynolds. Make my compliments to Mr Mudge.—I am, dear Sir, your most affectionate and most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

Another important portrait, which dates from this year, 1764, is that of the gallant Anglo-Teutonic General, Count Schaumbourg-Lippe, who is represented in full-length, with those dramatic and suggestive accessories of a martial character by which Reynolds loved to accentuate his male portraits of this class. The picture is in the royal collection, and was, probably, though not certainly, one of the very few royal commissions—another being the "Earl of Bute with his Secretary, Mr Chas. Jenkinson," to which reference has already been made.

It is at the end of 1764, too, that Carle Van Loo—called in Reynolds's memoranda "Mr Carlo Vanloo"—appears for a moment on the scene. He is now, within a few months of the close of his successful career, and has been first painter of Louis the Well-Beloved since 1762. He has, perhaps, come over to England for diversion and rest—after preparing elaborate sketches for the cupola of a chapel in the Invalides, which he was not destined himself to carry out; and also, no doubt, to pay that visit to England which so many French artists of the century, beginning with Watteau and Largillière, appear to have deemed obligatory. His art, especially in portrait and portrait-genre—of both of which the Louvre contains elaborate and, in their way, admirable specimens—was marked by a modish, artificial elegance, but was, nevertheless, in its way, of great certainty and completeness. It had, however, in its courtly conventionality, none of the human charm, the warmth, or the generalising breadth of Reynolds, and it was highly probable that neither painter was in a position properly to appreciate the art of the other. Northcote tells the story that, on the occasion of one of Van Loo's visits to Reynolds, when the former had been boasting of his knowledge of the old masters, and of the impossibility

of taking him in with a copy, the latter showed him a copy of his own, after Rembrandt, of an old woman's head, and smiled in his sleeve when the French court painter pronounced it an undoubted original—a trick, by the way, harmless enough, yet scarcely altogether in accordance with Reynolds's exquisite courtesy in his dealings with his fellow-men.

The Chevalier Van Loo appears to have established himself for a few months in Jermyn Street, seeking to rival the vogue of the English painters; but he died in July of this year (1765), and it would be difficult to point to any work of his executed in England, although we find that the Exhibition of the Incorporated Society in 1764 contained four portrait-pieces by him.

The foundation of The Club must have had the effect of maturing into friendship the acquaintance which had been established some time previously with two men, both destined to attain the highest renown in their different spheres, and both destined to count among the nearest and dearest of that band of male friends who made up Reynolds's inner circle, and constituted one of his greatest glories. These friends, both of them original members of The Club, were Oliver Goldsmith and Edmund Burke.

Goldsmith had now somewhat settled down, if he ever can be said to have settled down, after his restless beginnings as a jack-of-all-trades—itinerant scholar, usher, would-be medical man, and literary hack, one after the other, and sometimes two in combination. He was at this period just flitting from one set of chambers to another in the Temple; since the appearance of *The Traveller*, in December 1764, he had taken serious rank in literature, and the *Vicar of Wakefield* was to appear in March 1766. To Dr Johnson, Goldsmith certainly owed

his rapid rise in the literary hierarchy. He had gone to sup at Goldsmith's lodgings, as far back as May 1761, and had, on that occasion, appeared dressed with scrupulous neatness, having heard that Goldsmith—proverbially fond of fine clothes, but less so of paying for them—had made fun of the slovenliness of his outward appearance.

Johnson, indeed, in June 1763, tells Boswell that "Dr Goldsmith is one of the first men we now have as an author, and he is a very worthy man too. He has been loose in his principles, but he is coming right." It is not, however, until a little later on, that the portraits at Knole and Woburn Abbey, to be referred to presently, were executed.

With Burke, the irresistible orator, the patriot, the educator of the Whigs, the political philosopher, more far-seeing than any man of his age, we have less concern here than with Burke, the warm and unswerving friend of Reynolds, the man of letters, the enlightened, and, on more than one occasion, the substantial patron of art. He had already published the curious treatise, *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas on the Sublime and the Beautiful*, which had been reviewed in the *Monthly Review* by Goldsmith. This was held by Johnson to be "an example of true criticism," and by the arch-critic, Lessing, deemed well worthy of translation. According to Burke's *protégé*, the painter, Barry, he never ceased to take a warm and discriminating interest in artistic matters, and the latter has described him as having "embraced the whole concerns of art, ancient and modern, foreign as well as domestic." In 1763 he had already begun to befriend Barry, and was instrumental in bringing him back from Dublin to London; in 1765—at a moment when he would appear to have been temporarily relieved from his harassing money troubles

—he undertook to defray the greater part of the expense of sending him abroad.

It will be seen how Barry, whose strenuous yet frigid art became, in practice, much what Reynolds's was in the theory of his Discourses, after having received many obligations from the elder painter, developed temporarily into his malignant enemy and detractor; but afterwards, when the storm of hatred and envy had spent itself, gave, in his writings as in his acts, the most unequivocal signs of repentance for this attitude.

It was in the October of this year that Johnson completed his long-expected edition of Shakespeare, the proposals for which had been published as far back as 1756. Reynolds took a leading part with other friends of the lexicographer in urging him, for the sake of his reputation, to carry to an end a seemingly uncongenial task, and the painter (according to Leslie and Taylor), in order to advance its completion, even offered to contribute some notes of his own. Whether these were actually written, and, if written, were incorporated in the edition, there is nothing to show. In this year the University of Dublin had bestowed on Johnson the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws, whence he derives the title by which he is universally known.

To the Spring Gardens Exhibition of 1765, Reynolds contributed (1) an anonymous female portrait; (2) the famous portrait of Lady Sarah Bunbury sacrificing to the Graces.

"She kneels at a footstool before a flaming tripod"—say the biographers—"over which the triad of the Graces look down upon her as she makes a libation in their honour. A kneeling attendant behind, only less beautiful than her mistress, pours wine from a flagon."

The splendid beauty which had, but a few years previously, won the heart, and nearly the hand, of young King George, is well set off by the draperies of the pseudo-Greek costume, and there cannot be denied to the whole a certain imposing aspect. Yet the general effect is heavy, and—an unusal defect in Reynolds—somewhat lacking in refinement. The group of the Graces, put together from acknowledged classic models, is genuinely harmonious, but all the other paraphernalia of a cheap classicality are tawdry and theatrical in the extreme. It is, indeed, one of the many drawbacks to the master's mythological pieces that his Olympus is too palpably furnished from the properties of Drury Lane and Covent Garden ; and yet there was no lack, even at that time, of better models, especially among the Græco-Roman and Roman examples with which for two years he had kept company in the Eternal City.

Perhaps the best thing in connection with the picture is Mrs Thrale's irresistibly humorous comment :—"Lady Sarah never *did* sacrifice to the Graces ; she was a cricket-player and eat beef-steaks upon the Steyne at Brighthelmstone." The lady, if she did not sacrifice to the Graces, sacrificed, alas ! too liberally to their mistress ; for, later on, following a fashion to which the world in her day extended a certain measure of indulgence, she eloped from her spouse. This is an *égarement* which even the most censorious should surely be inclined to treat leniently, seeing that upon the questionable interlude followed the marriage with Major George Napier, from which sprung two of England's heroes, Sir William and Sir Charles Napier.

In such performances as this portrait of Lady Sarah, and still more in official and gala portraits, involving the painting of state robes and accessories, Reynolds's drapery-

man Peter Toms, and his pupils proper, Giuseppe Marchi, Berridge, and Barron, took what must be characterised as an undue share—inevitably detracting from the enjoyment to be derived from the master's own conception and brush-work. On the other hand it must be owned that the aforesaid drapery-men had, under their master's tuition and supervision, acquired very considerable ability in performing their part, and that their work, brought subsequently into harmony, no doubt, by Reynolds himself, rarely constituted a blot on the ensemble, though it, of course, lowered its general quality. And then it must be remembered that there were illustrious examples among the painter's most revered predecessors for this amiable weakness. To all will at once occur the name of Raphael, towards the close of his third period so little able to devote his own brush to the execution even of his most famous masterpieces; of Reynolds's much-imitated Rembrandt; of Rubens, whose great atelier became almost a manufactory; of Van Dyck, whose third, or fashionable, English period contains so many flagrantly inferior performances.

It is not possible to defend our master from the well-merited reproaches which have been levelled at him in connection with these frigid, empty classicalities, these cheap and unconvincing adjuncts of an impossible mythology, conventionalising rather than really enhancing the beauties to which they serve as a setting. Gainsborough, though like Reynolds, if in somewhat different fashion, he manipulated the dress of his time so as to render it less recalcitrant to artistic treatment, never transmogrified his sitters into heathen divinities more suggestive of the ballet and the masquerade than the true Olympus. Reynolds, with his "Lady Sarah Bunbury sacrificing to the Graces," with his "Mrs Hale as Euphrosyne," with his

"Lady Blake as Venus," with his "Duchess of Manchester as Diana," was the greatest, though by no means the only, sinner in this respect. Classicality, or what people were then pleased to accept as such, was in the air, radiating not so much from France—then metamorphosing the freer and less formal Louis Quinze into the less free and more classical Louis Seize style—as from Italy, at that time, as in the Elizabethan age, in much closer and more direct connection with England than the nearer country. Was the cause the increased study of the antique, promoted by the famous Winckelmann? Was it more particularly the revelation of classic art in its smaller, prettier phase, brought about by the unearthing of Pompeii and Herculaneum? That this peculiar phase of pseudo-classicism, if not born in England, flourished and acquired increased proportions on English soil is undeniable. To obtain the conviction that this is so, one need only compare what Cipriani, Bartolozzi, and Angelica Kauffmann produced before they came to England with what they did when acclimatised here.

The Pennsylvanian Quaker, young Benjamin West, who, coming to Europe at the age of twenty-one, had, after spending three years studying in Italy, settled in London in 1763, showed, at this exhibition of 1765, "Jupiter and Europa," "Venus and Cupid," and two portraits. Gainsborough appeared with a full-length equestrian portrait of General Honeywood—coveted by King—and a portrait of Colonel Nugent. Poor Wilson went on showing those splendid landscapes of his—truly classical not in subject alone, but in conception, and inspired in equal measure by Claude and by nature—and went on being cold-shouldered by the buyers and the public.

Somewhat of an enigma is Reynolds's intimacy with

the brilliant, sinister demagogue Wilkes, as revealed by the Pocket-Books. This appears to have been carried on even when the outlaw was lying in hiding near London, or braving the risk of arrest in the town itself, and therefore at some personal inconvenience to the painter. The latter had, it must be owned, an unequalled power of placing himself in sympathy with all kinds and conditions of men, and appreciated daring and strength of personality wherever he found it. Moreover, Wilkes must indeed have been a veritable *charmeur* to succeed in conquering Dr Johnson, armed at all points and prepared to be at his surliest, as we know that he most completely did. By the side of such a conquest as this, that of Reynolds must have appeared easy indeed.

It is in October 1766, that occurs in the Pocket-Book for that year the first entry of Miss Angelica Kauffmann as a sitter. As "Miss Angel" is still popularly supposed to have played an important part in Reynolds's life—to have been, in fact, the object of the only tender attachment to be inferred in this well-rounded life, blessed with unexampled success, with troops of friends such as no man ever had, but not gladdened with love—it is necessary to devote a little attention to the circumstances of his connection with a lady for whom he showed an affectionate, nay, it may be, a tender regard, but, so far as the evidence on the point tends to show, nothing more. What the lady's own views on the subject were, is by no means so clear. She was sentimental rather than passionate, and had withal a keen eye to the main chance in matters matrimonial; she was, above all things, a coquette—the one who in the amatory duel "*se laisse aimer*," but who feels aggrieved if she cannot, everywhere alike, be allowed to occupy that position, so flattering to the vanity, even if not

equally satisfying to the heart, of the ambitious fair.

In a recent biography of Angelica Kauffman by Miss Francis A. Gerard, some interesting information has been collected with regard to this portion of the celebrated artist's career, and of this, collated with the particulars obtained from other sources, it is proposed to make use. Born at Coire, in the Canton of the Grisons—or, as the more recent authorities have it, at Schwarzenburg, in the Bregenzer Wald—in 1741, she had already, young as she was, attained a certain vogue as a painter both at Rome, Naples, and Venice. In the first-named city she had met Winckelmann, of whom she painted two portraits, now respectively at Frankfort and Zurich. The influence of this famous man, then a kind of art-pontiff in Italy, may well have had something to do with the development of her style in the direction of what was then deemed to be classicism. In 1766, having made great friends with the English envoy at Venice, Lord Wentworth, and his wife, she decided to leave the City of the Lagunes for England, with Lady Wentworth, and, under her wing, was at once introduced into the best English society.

In 1765, according to Leslie and Taylor, she had appeared for the first time as an exhibitor among the Associated Painters at "Mr Moreing's great room in Maiden Lane," with a somewhat feeble portrait of Garrick. If this be really the case, the year of her coming to England must, however, have been not 1766 but 1765. In 1766 she sent to the same exhibition a "Shepherd and Shepherdess of Arcadia, moralising at the side of a Sepulchre," a subject of which the biographers say that it was "used originally by Guercino, and imitated from him by Sir Joshua in his picture of Mrs Bouverie and Mrs Crewe a few years later." They seem to forget, how-

ever, the noblest of all the versions of the subject—that of Nicholas Poussin now in the Louvre—in which three shepherds and a young girl, classically-draped, pensively consider a tomb sheltered by trees, one of the youths kneeling as he points to the inscription, "*Et in Arcadia ego.*" These words are textually repeated, too, by Reynolds in his picture above named.

Miss Angelica was first made acquainted with the English master by Lord Exeter, at a party given by Lord Spencer. Writing in July 1766 to her father, who had not yet joined her in England, she says:—"I have been to visit several of the studios here, but there is none to compare with that of Mr Reynolds. He is decidedly the first English painter. He has a peculiar method, and his pictures are chiefly historical (*sic*). He has a light brush (*pennello volante*), which produces a wonderful effect in light and shade." In October 1767, she writes again:—"He is one of my kindest friends, and never ceases praising me to everyone. As a proof of his admiration for me, he has asked me to sit for my picture to him, and in return I am to paint him."

This interchange of courtesies between painters recalls the visit of the celebrated Venetian pastelliste, La Rosalba, to Paris, in the beginning of the eighteenth century, when in similar fashion she and Watteau painted each the other's portrait.

Though a little out of place, as to date, it may be well to give here the information that Reynolds's portrait of Angelica appeared in the Exhibition of the Society of Incorporated Artists of 1769, and was engraved by Bartolozzi. Angelica's portrait of her brother-artist was painted for the friend of the latter, Mr Parker of Saltram, afterwards created Earl of Morley. Her portraits by herself are to be found in the National Portrait Gallery, the

Angelica Kauffmann

Berlin Museum, the Alte Pinakothek of Munich, at Innsbrück, and in the Painters' Gallery at the Uffizi.

Not a few foreign writers—to cite most of whom, however, would, in most cases, be to cite the unknown or the forgotten—have, on the one hand, accused Reynolds of an unworthy jealousy of the engaging girl-painter, and, on the other, have striven to make him out hopelessly in love and taking revenge for his rejection by joining in an organised and abominable conspiracy against her. All three statements appear, on the face of them, and doubly so after examination, equally unworthy of credence. The ridiculous assumption of Reynolds's professional jealousy vanishes into thin air when confronted with the fact that he sent her many sitters, and, among them, personages of the highest position.

And then as to the supposed love-passages! How much has been built up on how slender a substructure—not much more than the one word "*Fiori;*" that pretty and even, if you will, tender reminder attached to her name in the Pocket-Book! In considering any graceful courtesies shown, any hyperbolic compliments paid to the charming stranger by Reynolds, who was some eighteen years her senior, it is necessary, moreover, to bear in mind his natural urbanity, and that peculiarly amiable quality, the constant desire to be of service to others. He liked to live in an atmosphere of friendship, not heated beyond a certain point; to radiate a light which brightened, even if it did not much warm. What his carefully turned and polished compliments, fashioned on the grandiose if rather empty Johnsonian model, meant, may be best appreciated by remembering what he said to others—as when he requested to be allowed to go down to posterity on the hem of Mrs Siddons's garment. And then, though his subsequent relation to Miss Burney was, it must be allowed,

much more parental, and less tender, than that which bound him to Angelica, his friendship for her was, to the full, as solid a one, and was manifested in quite as many acts of kindness and beneficence.

On the other hand, Nathaniel Dance was undoubtedly in love with Angelica, and was rejected by her, a fate which befel also the passionate, imaginative young Switzer Fuseli, then newly settled in London, as yet a novice in art. J. T. Smith in his *Life of Nollekens* accuses her of coquetry of a type so vulgar and obvious that it is difficult to accept his account as absolutely veracious, so little does it accord with other contemporary pictures of the sentimental lady. "Once," he says, "she professed to be enamoured of Nathaniel Dance; to the next visitor she would disclose the secret that she was dying for Sir Joshua Reynolds." And again, the same blunt personage describes her in a private box at Drury Lane, carrying on a pronounced flirtation with both Dance and Fuseli at one and the same time—suffering, indeed (if the truth must be told), an arm of either round her waist, and herself impartially holding a hand of each of her enterprising lovers.

Many years later, when she had again settled down in Rome, she carried on a sentimental, middle-aged, and wholly decorous flirtation with Goethe, who read to her his *Iphigenia*, and sat to her for his portrait, afterwards sending her from Germany the manuscript of *Egmont*. It was evidently the woman who attracted him, and not the painter, to the limitations and defects of whose art even friendship could not blind him. This is a more pleasing picture than the last, and one which makes us loth to believe Angelica, even some twenty years earlier, capable of the boarding-school coquetries of which she has been accused.

It was in 1767 that the lady was, less by love than by social ambition, decoyed into her unfortunate marriage with a showy impostor, calling himself Count Frederick de Horn, but really, so far as can be made out, the valet of the person he undertook to represent. It has been stated that it was at Dr Burney's in St Martin's Street that Angelica first met the scoundrel who entrapped her, but this cannot be accurate, seeing that the Burney family did not migrate thither until 1773. The ill-matched pair were married at St James's Church, Piccadilly, and it was three weeks before the enormity of the deception practised on the unfortunate girl began to reveal itself. The false Count, after a partial disclosure had become inevitable, attempted to carry off his wife by violence, with the object, as may be surmised, of living off her earnings. It was not until the 10th of February, 1768, after Angelica had been made to suffer terribly for her imprudence, that a formal deed of separation was drawn up and signed.

It is here that calumny steps in and endeavours to connect Reynolds with his young friend's misfortune, making out the humiliating union a plot, and the master a participator in it. G. G. de Rossi, in his full biography of the artist (Florence, 1810), has hinted at an unreciprocated passion of Reynolds for Angelica; but Würzbach in his *Lexicon* says: "Suspicion in this unpleasant affair fell upon Reynolds." Steinberg goes further, saying, "There is not the smallest doubt that this contemptible mystification was planned for the humiliation of the artist, and that Reynolds had a hand in the game. Whether it was *he*, or a friend of *his*, an *artist*, who had proposed for Angelica, and been refused (Nathaniel Dance?), it is enough that, out of revenge, these two concocted the plot to disgrace her." A high modern authority, Herr Dohme, has, in his *Kunst and Künstler*, according to Miss Gerard, made some reference to

the matter in the above sense. The new biographer suggests that Nathaniel Dance may possibly have suborned the adventurer with the assistance of his friend, Nathaniel Hone, who, some years afterwards, made a notorious attack upon both Reynolds and Angelica, to which it will be necessary to refer later on. But as this hypothesis appears to be altogether unsupported by proof, it must be left to take care of itself. This sensational and, as daily journalism would phrase it, "romantic" version of Angelica's misadventure—one, however, which is fiction *not* founded on fact—bears a singular resemblance to the discomfiture of Bulwer-Lytton's heroine, Pauline, in the *Lady of Lyons;* and the surmise is surely a fair one, that the story of the plot devised by the disappointed suitor to marry the proud *bourgeoise* of Lyons to the gardener's son is derived from the equally romantic "drama in real life."

It is significant that Angelica's biographer, De Rossi, to whom these facts have come direct from her father, Johann Josef Kauffmann, makes no mention of the so-called Reynolds conspiracy, although, as we have seen, he mentions the supposed attachment. If any disproof of a malevolent and altogether futile legend, such as is the foregoing, were wanted, it would be found in the fact that, a year after the unfortunate mystification, Reynolds publicly exhibits her portrait, and that she is, at the close of 1768—doubtless at his suggestion, or, at any rate, with his full approval—chosen as one of the original members of the new Royal Academy. Moreover, the urbane President remains her fast friend in the succeeding years, and continues to shower favours upon her and her family.

To those having the least acquaintance with Reynolds, the temperate, the courteous, and, above all, the busy, the idea of his playing the dark, midnight villain is irresistibly ludicrous.

Still, hearken to the Bazile of Beaumarchais's *Barbier de Séville* in his immortal exposition of calumny :—

"*Croyez qu'il n'y a pas de plate méchanceté, pas d'horreurs, pas de conte absurde, qu'on ne fasse adopter aux oisifs d'une grande ville, en s'y prenant bien . . . .*"

At this stage it is difficult, indeed, to understand the enthusiasm which Angelica Kauffmann's art excited, not only with the general public, but among artists. Its feeble and vapid sentimentalising of classic subjects and motives happened to hit the popular taste just at a moment when sentiment, or rather what our neighbours more justly style *sensiblerie*, was still an indispensable adjunct to gentility ; when, at the same time, the love of the antique, as it was then understood, was greatly on the increase. A combination of thin and watery sentiment with a not less superficial and pretty classicality was apparently just the thing wanted, as being well within reach of the majority. And then the fair limner's neo-classicism was, at least, decorative in aspect, and such as to enhance, while it was enhanced by, the internal architecture, the decoration, and the furniture of her period. The fact remains that, save the graceful Venetian La Rosalba, who began the century, and the fascinating and capable, if at the same time cold and self-conscious, portrait-painter, Madame Vigée-Lebrun, who ended it, no female artist achieved in her day so wide-spread a fame as Angelica Kauffmann.

CHAPTER IV

Exhibition of 1766—"Mrs Hale as Euphrosyne"—Portraits of the Marquis of Granby—West's "Orestes and Pylades"—Reynolds elected to Dilettanti Society—Thursday Night Club—Samuel Foote—Contributes Nothing to Exhibition of 1767—Goldsmith's "Good-Natured Man"—Portrait of Goldsmith—"Crossing the Brook"—Journey to Paris in Autumn of 1768—Notes on Journey—Goldsmith's Humorous Lines on Reynolds and Angelica Kauffmann—Internecine Feuds of Incorporated Society—Negotiations for Foundation of Royal Academy—Part played by the King—Attitude of Reynolds—Constitution of New Body—First Members—Baretti—First Exhibition of the Royal Academy—"Mrs Bouverie and Mrs Crewe"—"Mrs Bouverie with Her Child"—Sir Joshua's Social Engagements—Dinner at Boswell's Lodgings—Mrs Montagu on Shakespeare—Baretti's Trial for Murder—Portrait of Baretti—Mrs Thrale's Verses on it—Sir Joshua's Negro robbed—Obtains Mitigation of Sentence.

LET us now return to the more normal incidents in our master's career, after this long digression on a subject which cannot fail, nevertheless, to appear important to those who wish to estimate rightly, not only Reynolds the painter, but Reynolds the man.

He contributed the following four pictures to the exhibition of 1766:—

"Mrs Hale as Euphrosyne" (Milton's l'Allegro).

One of his best-known but least successful examples of the mythological-allegorical mood.

In this the smiling or smirking countenance of the jocund goddess, and her swift advance across the canvas, do not save the picture as a whole from complete failure, so lacking is it in true grace and spontaneity.

A portrait of the Marquis of Granby.

Another of Sir Geoffrey Amherst.

The group of Mr Paine, the architect, with his son, now in the Bodleian Collection.

The portrait of Lord Granby, erroneously described by Leslie and Taylor as a half-length, was, on the contrary, the great full-length, showing the gallant general, who was this very year appointed Commander-in-chief, standing at ease in a military dress, wearing a bright cuirass, over which is flung the loose coat of the Blues; he rests his left arm on the withers of his horse, on the other side of which stands a negro — the background being a battle scene. The catalogue of the exhibition is pretty conclusive on the point; it describes the picture in the anonymous fashion of the time as "A General Officer, *whole-length*." The full-length (96 in. by 80 in.) exists in several examples, of which one is at Woburn Abbey; another belongs to H.M. the Queen, and is preserved at St James's Palace (No. 56 at the Guelph Exhibition of the New Gallery); and yet another (of middling quality only) is at Trinity College, Cambridge. It has been splendidly mezzotinted by James Watson.

Leslie and Taylor have, no doubt, confused this version with the half-length in which Lord Granby appears in a costume almost identical, and an attitude very similar, leaning against a column. This last must, however, have been painted some years earlier, since it was mezzotinted in 1760 by Richard Houston, and again in the same year by C. Spooner. Both pictures are among the frankest and most unconventional pieces of characterisation that Reynolds has left us. The bluff, manly soldier with his bald head produces at first a curious effect on the beholder, so unusual is such a spectacle in the portraiture of the eighteenth century, save in that of artists, authors, and

philosophers; but the sympathy of the delineation soon wins its way notwithstanding.

At the same exhibition, Gainsborough had, among other things, the great portrait of Garrick, to which detailed reference has already been made. Reynolds's four pupils, Marchi, Barron, Berridge, and Parry, had each of them a portrait. Both Hudson and Cotes were well represented, while John Singleton Copley, the New England painter who was soon to become acclimatised in England, is represented by "A Boy with a Flying Squirrel." The great sensation of the year, as Northcote tells us (Vol. I. p. 142) is caused by Benjamin West's classical pictures—"The Continence of Scipio"; "Orestes and Pylades"; "Cymon and Iphigenia"; and "Diana and Endymion." These efforts in the direction of the grand style by an English, or rather an Anglo-American, painter, at a time when such subjects were supposed to be sacred to the Bolognese school and their followers in Italy and France, excited prodigious attention; the rush to see the "Orestes and Pylades," both at the artist's house and at the exhibition, being tremendous. The downfall of this picture from its high estate can only be paralleled by the fate of Guérin's once famous "*Retour de Marcus-Sextus*," which, when shown in Paris in the year 1799, carried all before it, being publicly crowned by the artists who had taken part in the competition. It now hangs neglected or mocked at in the Louvre, as frigid a piece of pseudo-classicality as even the school of David ever produced. The fate of the "Orestes and Pylades" is even more humiliating, seeing that it is of, but not in, the National Gallery—belonging to the national collection, but at present neither hung nor catalogued as part of it.

Reynolds had, in 1766, painted the King's youngest sister, unhappy Princess Caroline Matilda—of Struensee

memories—just before her miserable marriage with the King of Denmark. The painter told Northcote he could not make a good picture of her, as she was weeping almost all the time she was sitting.

Sittings up to the close of 1766 had been given by the unfortunate Marquis of Tavistock, husband of Lady Elizabeth Keppel, Reynolds's valued friend and, as has been seen, one of his favourite sitters. His portraits by our master are: one in the collection of the Duke of Bedford at Woburn, and another which was with the Keppel pictures at Quiddenham (No. 151 in the Reynolds Exhibition of the Grosvenor Gallery). Lord Tavistock was killed while out hunting in the early part of 1767, and the fair, gentle Marchioness never recovered the terrible shock which she thus sustained; she died of decline at Lisbon in November of the same year.

Reynolds was pretty frequently in the company of Kitty Clive, both in 1766 and at other periods, but it does not appear that he ever painted the great comic actress, who had been portrayed by Hogarth among others. She was at this time mature and florid, nay, much over-blown, and being renowned for her good sense, as well as her *vis comica*, she may not have cared to have her features—at no period of her life beautiful—perpetuated at this advanced stage of her brilliant career,

It is in the early part of 1866 that must necessarily be placed the interesting unfinished canvas, "The Second Marquis of Rockingham and Edmund Burke, his Secretary," contributed by Sir Frederic Leighton, P.R.A., to the Reynolds Exhibition—a painting doubtless intended to commemorate the brilliant part played by Burke in the Rockingham Administration, and the loyal service rendered to his chief. This work, of an unusually energetic and dramatic character, remained unfinished in the pos-

session of Sir Joshua at the time of his death, having been put aside either, as has been suggested, on account of the lack of repose in the composition, or perhaps because it represented in politics what turned out to be only an ephemeral state of things. It passed from the collection of the Marchioness of Thomond (Reynolds's niece, Miss Palmer) into the possession of Thomas Phillips, R.A., and then into that of Sir F. Grant, P.R.A., before being acquired by the actual President of the Royal Academy. Another portrait of Burke, by our master, was (No. 65), lent by Mr William Maxted to the same exhibition, and yet another was contributed to the Guelph Exhibition by the venerable Archdeacon Burney.

In 1766, or the beginning of 1767, was, in all probability, painted the portrait of the youthful Duke of Devonshire, shown by the Hon. F. B. Massey Mainwaring at the Guelph Exhibition, in which the head of the Cavendishes is depicted at the age of eighteen, in a three-quarter length, wearing a crimson-slashed Vandyck costume, with a falling lace collar, and powdered hair, *en perruque*.

Reynolds had, in May 1766, been elected a member, but not yet the painter-in-ordinary, of the Dilettanti Society—his sponsor being the same Lord Charlemont who was, without sufficient foundation, deemed to be one of the founders of the Literary Club—and he appears to have regularly attended the Sunday dinners, at which by no means art alone was the subject of discussion. A club of quite another kind was the "Thursday Night Club," which met at the "Star-and-Garter" in Pall Mall, and was composed of hard-living fashionables like Gilly Williams, Selwyn, Topham Beauclerk, Lord March, Lord Carlisle, and Roger Mostyn. To this Reynolds, drifting more and more into the great world, yet remaining entirely faithful to all his friends in other circles, had also

been elected, and he is, moreover, not infrequently to be heard of at the subscription masquerades given by *élégants* at Carlisle House and the sumptuously-adorned Pantheon.

Another striking figure among the sitters of 1767 is the celebrated comedian, Samuel Foote, the Coquelin of his time, and the brilliant, reckless conversationalist in whose presence Garrick himself paused abashed and shorn of all his aplomb. Indeed, his fame as a table wit and a mimic almost exceeded that which he won and maintained on the boards. We find even Dr Johnson, who affected to treat the histrion *de haut en bas*, and systematically made light of his pretensions, saying, in recounting a meeting at one of those dinners of wits and celebrities so common at that time: "Having no good opinion of the fellow, I was resolved not to be pleased, and it is very difficult to please a man against his will. I went on eating my dinner pretty sullenly, affecting not to mind him. But the dog was so very comical that I was obliged to lay down my knife and fork, throw myself back in my chair, and fairly laugh it out. No, sir, he was irresistible."

Reynolds himself is credited—on what authority does not appear—with having said that "by Foote's buffoonery and broad-faced merriment public decency and everything estimable among men were trod under foot"—a phrase which sounds rather like Johnson, grave and censorious, coming on the top of Johnson, gay and jovial, and is indeed a judgment more severe than the genial master was apt to pass on his fellow-men, especially his sitters and associates.

Foote's masterly and singularly living portrait by our master shows him leaning on a stick with his arms crossed, wearing a white coat, yellow-flowered waistcoat, and wig. It was sent by Lord Sackville from Knole to the Guelph Exhibition; another likeness is at the Garrick Club.

Zoffany, who revelled in the humours of the stage, and depicted its comic aspects with a rare mastery and spontaneity, has given us Foote and Hayes in the character of "Major Sturgeon" and "Sir Jacob Jollup" in the farce of *The Mayor of Garralt* (Guelph Exhibition, No. 315); and again, Foote and Watson in the characters of "The President" and "Dr Last" in *The Devil upon Two Sticks* (Guelph Exhibition, No. 317). Both these became the property of the Earl of Carlisle—the same nobleman who purchased the German painter's "David Garrick as Abel Drugger," presently to be mentioned (Guelph Exhibition, No. 316), and all three now belong to the present earl.

Barry, who was studying in Rome under the ægis of the generous Burke, writes to Dr Sleigh, in November 1867, words which show his judgment on the works of the head of the English school, not yet obscured by disappointment and unworthy jealousy:—

"I shall, with heartfelt satisfaction, say that Reynolds and our people at home possess, with a very few exceptions, all that exists of sound art in Europe."

This year for the first time Reynolds failed to contribute anything to the Spring Gardens Exhibition; whether because—as Burke, writing to Barry, says—he, though having ready "some better portraits than he ever before painted, did not think mere heads sufficient," or, more probably, for the reason that he was disgusted with the internal squabbles of the rival factions in the Incorporated Society of Artists. On this occasion Gainsborough shone practically without a rival, exhibiting three portraits and a landscape. Among the other contributors were Francis Cotes, John Singleton Copley, Nathaniel Dance, Cosway—exhibiting for the first time; Benjamin West—more classical than ever—Zoffany,

Wright of Derby, Richard Wilson—with English landscapes and not Italian this time—Zuccarelli, and, among the water-colour painters, Cozens, the brothers Paul and Thomas Sandby, and the Rookers.

Reynolds had already, in November 1767, made one of the company assembled at Burke's rooms to hear him read, on the author's behalf, Goldsmith's comedy, *The Good-Natured Man*, which, after many squabbles, had been withdrawn from Garrick, and accepted for production at Covent Garden. He now, on the 29th of January 1768, witnessed the *première* of the play introduced by a ponderous prologue from the pen of Dr Johnson. We know that the production was, on the first night, by no means an unqualified success, the realistic language and demeanour of the bailiffs, in the famous scene with Honeywood, appearing vulgar to the audience in the galleries, who signified their displeasure by hissing. We know, too, that Goldsmith, although he professed himself well satisfied with the result, when left alone with Johnson burst into tears and vowed he would never write again. H's portrait was painted by Reynolds as far back as 1766, but was not exhibited until it appeared at the Royal Academy in 1770, as a pendant to that of Johnson, (Nos. 205 and 211 at the Guelph Exhibition, to which the pictures were contributed from Knole). The famous canvas is a half-length, showing the poet in a black coat and brown mantle with fur, holding in his left hand a book; his limner and friend having, with admirable judgment, avoided presenting his sitter in any of those too sumptuous garments for which the naïvely-conceited author was celebrated. It is of this portrait that Leslie and Taylor, who, by the way, somewhat overestimate its artistic value, have said :—"Sir Joshua meant to paint the author of the *Vicar of Wakefield* and of the

Deserted Village, and not the Goldy who was laughed at by Boswell and Hawkins, and quizzed by Burke."

Miss Reynolds, whose judgment was sounder than were her performances as a painter, thought it marvellous that so much dignity could have been given to the poet's face, while preserving so strong a likeness. "For"—she remarked—"Dr Goldsmith's cast of countenance, and, indeed, his whole figure, impressed one at first sight with an idea of his being a low mechanic, particularly, I believe, a journeyman tailor. . . ."

In 1768 Reynolds exhibited for the last time in the Spring Gardens gallery, sending to it one of his most delightfully natural and humorous performances, "Crossing the Brook," as it is now called. This is a portrait of Hester Frances Cholmondeley (afterwards Lady Bellingham), the child of Peg Woffington's noisy, brilliant sister, who had married a clergyman, the Hon. Robert Cholmondeley, and was not exactly to be classed among, although she consorted with, the Blue Stockings. It was she who, ten years later, went mad about "Evelina," and treated Fanny Burney, at Sir Joshua's, to the overwhelming and altogether disconcerting reception of which the authoress gives so amusing an account. The little girl is shown, with inimitable *naïveté*, carrying her struggling, kicking dog across a brook; the momentariness of the motive, that quality for which the painter has been so much praised — perhaps over-praised — being hit to a nicety, without loss of the true characterisation which is so difficult to combine with it. It is not a show piece—the harmonies of the child's dress being sober green and brown, and the rest of the colouring to match—but in its record of the ways of childhood truthfully and with infinite sympathy observed, it is greatly to be preferred to such studies of children as "Collina," "Muscipula,"

the "Infant Academy," "The Age of Innocence," etc., in which Reynolds's admiration for archness has led him into a regrettable *minauderie* and exaggeration. "Crossing the Brook" was No. 57 at the Reynolds Exhibition, to which it was contributed by Mrs Buchanan Riddell.

It would be tedious and unnecessary to enter here upon a discussion of the internal dissensions which rent asunder the Spring Gardens Society, and practically brought it to the ground. Reynolds, like many other artists of repute, had withdrawn himself from its meetings, which he had, indeed, ceased to attend some time before he withdrew his support as a contributor. Some few remarks on the subject must be made a little later on in connection with the incubation and foundation of the Royal Academy.

It was in the autumn of 1768 that Reynolds made a journey to Paris in the company of Edmund Burke's younger brother, Richard Burke.

The following notes on the trip are taken from the Pocket-Book (Leslie and Taylor—Vol. I. p. 285) :—

"September 9th. Friday. Set out for Paris, arrived at Canterbury.

"Saturday. Dover, sailed at eleven in the morning.

"Sunday the 11th, two in the morning, Calais. Boulogne, axletree broke. Beds of mussels.

"Monday, dined at Abbeville. Lay at Amiens, saw the Water Tower.

"Tuesday, dined at St Just; the axletree broke. Lay at Chantilly. In the palace are two pictures of Vandyck, a man in armour (of which there is a print by Pontius), and a lady; and the allegorical portrait of the Prince of Condé, mentioned by the Abbé de Bois, painted by Corneille. Saw Champlâtrier at Ecouen. Saw another hotel of Prince Condé.

"Saturday, dined at St Denis. In the Cathedral or Domo is an excellent statue of an angel, in the act of writing with his finger, something in the attitude of the slave with the thorn. Lay at Paris. Hotel Platier, Rue Platier.

"Thursday, dined at Mr Panchaud's, saw the Palais Royal. Drank tea at Mr Flint's, after which the Italian Opera.

"Saturday, dined with Lord Mulgrave, saw the Luxemburg, and the French comedy, *the Misanthrope*—Préville, lady; Physician (?); Molé, Coxcomb.

"Sunday, Mr and Mrs Flint dined with us. The Italian comedy. Carlini."

"Monday 19th. Saw pictures.

"Tuesday, 20th. The collection of Monsieur L'Empereur—about six Teniers; two small sketches of Rubens; a Boor saying Grace, Rembrandt—at 12, Mr Panchaud.

"Wednesday, 9. Mr Panchaud.

"Thursday, 10. Mr Collins.

"Friday, 11. To go with a picture-dealer to see Mr Bernway.

"Saturday, 10. Mr Ramée; 2, Miss Flint; Versailles.

"Thursday, 29th. Invalides. Dined in company with a vic . . .

Friday, 30th. Abbé at the Sulpice; Hotel de Toulouse. Gallery. Pietro da Cortona and Guido.

"October 2nd, Sunday. Sceaux; Choisy.

"Monday. La Muette; St Cloud; Bellevue; Meudon; the extensive banister (?); the prospect; Sèvres manufactory of porcelain.

"Tuesday. St Benoit; a Pietà of Seb. Bourdon; Enfants Trouvés; Sorbonne; Monument of Richelieu.

"Wednesday. To breakfast with my sister.

"Thursday. Mr Drumgold.

"Friday. Baron Tier; at home.

"Saturday, 3. Lord Fitzwilliam."

Sunday and Monday are blank.

"Tuesday. Nelson.

"Wednesday the 12th, 10 to 1. Luxembourgh; Minerva instructing a Girl, by Tremolie. L'Hotel de Bretonvilliers, en St Louis; Gallery of Seb. Bourdon.

"Tuesday, 18th. Set out from Paris, 1 o'clock; lay at Senlis.

"Wednesday. Lay at Peronne.

"Thursday. Dined at Arras; the Cathedral not worth seeing; lay in the Fauxburg (*sic*) of Bethune.

"Friday. Arrived at Calais at 5 in the afternoon.

"Saturday. Set out at 1 o'clock at noon. Arrived at Dover at 5; lay at Sittingbourne.

"Sunday, 23rd, at 10 in the morning, arrived in London.

"Monday, 24th. Dined with Dr Goldsmith."

When we find Reynolds ignoring altogether, in these notes, the cathedral of Amiens—one of the churches of the world, and the Parthenon of Gothic architecture, both as regards its structure, and its unrivalled sculptural adornments—we might well be a little lenient to Horace Walpole, rotten and fallacious as was the "Strawberry Hill" Gothic, which owed its rise to him, and from the same source derived its opprobrious nickname. And again, at St Denis, which, in these last years before the Revolution, was a perfect treasure-house of medieval and Renaissance art (both French and Italian) of the highest class, our master notes only this "excellent statue of an angel in the act of writing with his finger."

This *Carlini* was Carlo Bertinazzi, the famous *Arlecchino* of the Italian comedy then acclimatised in Paris. One is led to wish that Reynolds might have portrayed him, so as to add one more to his great series of histrionic

celebrities; though, perhaps, Gainsborough, the inimitable painter of the dancer, La Bacelli, and of the male soprano, Tenducci, might have succeeded even better with such a subject as this. A portrait-study of this class, and one of the masterpieces of the French school, is Watteau's famous life-sized "Gilles," in the Lacaze section of the Louvre.

Forster calls attention to the frequency of Reynolds's engagements at this time with Goldsmith, now living in his new rooms at Brick Court, Temple, showing, as these do, a still further drawing together of the bonds of intimacy between the two men. On one occasion, our master, no doubt accompanied by Goldy, pays a visit to the Shilling Rubber Club, held at the Devil's Tavern, whether merely as an onlooker, or to indulge his passion for whist, does not appear. It is a year later—in 1769—that Reynolds's doctor, Sir George, or, as he then was, Dr Baker, gives a party, to which Goldsmith is invited, apparently as an after-thought, to meet Reynolds and Angelica Kauffmann; for, affecting a comic anger and disdain at this want of due ceremony, he responds with the following lines:—

> "But 'tis Reynolds's way,
> From wisdom to stray,
> And Angelica's whim,
> To be frolic like him;
> But alas! your good worships, how could they be wiser,
> When both have been spoilt in to-day's *Advertiser*."

With more, to the effect that Goldy is better engaged and does not intend to honour the party.

The *Advertiser's* fulsome, and, in this case, particularly indiscriminate praise—quoted below—was certainly enough to turn an older head than that of the fair

and imprudent artist, by this time relieved from the presence of her impostor husband, but not wholly from the evils which she had wilfully drawn down upon herself:—

> "While fair Angelica with matchless grace
> Paints Conway's form and Stanhope's face,
> Our hearts to beauty willing homage pay,
> We praise, admire, and gaze our souls away—
> But when the likeness she hath done for thee,
> O Reynolds! with astonishment we see,
> Forced to submit, with all our pride we own,
> Such strength, such harmony excelled by none,
> And thou art rivalled by thyself alone."

This is, no doubt, the feeble portrait of Reynolds, painted by Angelica for his friend, Mr Parker of Saltram.

We now come to one of the most important moments in the life of our master—to a turning point in his career, in which his action has been very diversely appreciated. This is the foundation of the Royal Academy, which, to be thoroughly understood, should be considered in conjunction with the negotiations which preceded it and the developments which were its inevitable consequence. Into the details of the fierce and protracted squabbles between the directors and the fellows of the Incorporated Society of Artists, it is not possible here to enter. It must suffice to state that the climax came at the meeting of the 18th of October 1768, at which the directors, who had practically had their way for eight years, were signally defeated and crushed—sixteen of the fellows being elected to take the places of as many of their opponents, with the result that the remaining eight directors, finding themselves powerless, resigned on the 10th of November.

A word has already been said as to the neutral attitude adopted by Reynolds during the progress of the internecine quarrels, and his ultimate withdrawal from

the exhibition. The plot matured, and the storm broke, during his journey to France just referred to; there being, indeed, such a coincidence in point of time that it is difficult to resist the surmise—which no direct evidence, however, warrants us in making—that his departure was timed so as to excuse him from any active participation in the affray. West, who had withdrawn from the Society about the same time, had the ear of the King, and being questioned by His Majesty as to these "indecent bickerings," explained the situation, no doubt, from his own point of view; whereupon the King declared that "he would patronise any association formed on principles calculated to advance the art." West communicated this pronouncement to three of the former directors of the Society—William Chambers, the King's architect, Francis Cotes, and Moser. Chambers was then deputed to wait upon the King, and to submit that "many artists of reputation, together with himself, were very desirous of establishing a society that should more effectually promote the Arts of Design than any yet established," but that they knew that their plan could not be carried into execution without His Majesty's patronage. The King gave another favourable but vague reply, whereupon a memorial was drawn up in due form and presented, on November 28th, by Cotes, Chambers and Moser, setting forth the objects of the petitioners—namely, "the establishing a well-regulated school or academy of design for the use of students in the arts, and an annual exhibition, open to all artists of distinguished merit." The King appears to have replied—and not unwisely or unbecomingly—that the culture of the arts was a national concern, and that they might depend upon his patronage and assistance; he further desired that he might be placed in possession of their full intentions.

Chambers then prepared the sketch of a plan, which having shown to as many of the gentlemen concerned as the shortness of the time would permit, he presented to His Majesty on December 7th.

The reason given by Leslie and Taylor for the absence of Reynolds's name from the proceedings up to the present point—namely, the circumstance that he had never received any personal patronage or notice from George III.—is probably the true one. He might very naturally infer that he was not, as, indeed, he never was, a *persona grata* at Court, and that his interference would not be likely to help the negotiations forward. The King's instructor in perspective, Kirby, had, moreover, been recently elected President of the Incorporated Society, in the place of Hayman, and he might also very naturally imagine that the royal pupil would be desirous of backing up his professor. That the latter knew nothing of what was going on, is evident from the fact that he assured the doomed Society, in his inaugural address, that the King would not give countenance to the renegades. In a pamphlet published by the Incorporated Society against the Royal Academy, when the foundation of the latter had become an established fact, it is stated that Reynolds originally disapproved of the proceedings of the seceders, and declared that he would not act or exhibit with them. There is more than an innuendo in this piece of special pleading that the bait of knighthood held out to the master may have operated to bring about his change of purpose.

It appears to have been suggested, while the constitution of the new academy was under discussion, that among its *ex officio* members should be some of the nobility, patrons of art; this proposition being similar to the condition imposed, it will be remembered, by the Dilettanti Society when, in 1755, they had

been requested to interest themselves in the foundation of a new academic body, to undertake and advance the "Teaching of the Fine Arts." It is, we are told, to the good sense of the King that we owe the abandonment of any attempt to give effect to this portion of the scheme.

His Majesty considered the sketch of a plan thus submitted by the triumvirate, made some revision, and directed that the document should be drawn up in proper form. It will be well to give, in the very words of Leslie and Taylor, the account of what immediately followed, since it embodies that furnished by West of the transactions in question, and, it is stated, moreover, by Tom Taylor that he obtained access, for the purpose of giving an accurate version of the proceedings, to the original minute-books of the Royal Academy.

"A list was made out of thirty names, including that of Reynolds, to be submitted to the King, with a list of officers. A meeting of the artists was appointed for the 9th, to take place at the house of Wilton the sculptor, the King having named the next morning to receive the lists.

"Penny and Moser called on Reynolds, but failed in securing his attendance at the meeting. West then went to him immediately, and informed him of the arrangements that were in progress for constituting an academy, and that thirty artists named by the King, of the forty members of which it was intended it should consist, were to assemble on that evening at Wilton's.

"Reynolds was still slow of belief. He told West that Kirby had assured him in the most decided manner that there was no truth whatever in the rumour of such a design being in agitation; and that he thought it would be derogatory to attend a meeting constituted, as Kirby

represented it, by persons who had no sanction for doing what they had undertaken. To this West answered, 'As you have been told by Mr Kirby that there is no intention of the kind, and by me that there is, that even the rules are framed, and the officers condescended on, yourself to be President, I must insist on your going with me to the meeting, where you will be satisfied which of us deserves to be credited in this business.'

"In the evening, at the usual hour, West went to take tea with Reynolds, before going to the meeting; but either from design or accident, tea was not served till an hour later than usual—not, indeed, till the time fixed for the artists to assemble at Wilton's; so that, when they arrived there, the meeting was on the point of breaking up, conceiving that, as neither Reynolds nor West had come, something extraordinary had happened. But on their appearing, a burst of satisfaction manifested the anxiety that had been felt, and without any further delay the company proceeded to carry into effect the wishes of the King. The code of laws was read, and, the gentlemen recommended by the Sovereign being declared officers, the laws were accepted."

It was on the next day, the 10th of November, that the King formally approved and signed the instrument incorporating the Academy with the royal sanction, and the first general meeting of the newly-constituted body took place on the 14th of November 1768.

The instrument sets forth that certain painters, sculptors, and architects have solicited the King's assistance in establishing a society for promoting the Arts of Design, and that His Majesty does thereby institute and establish the said society, under the name and title of The Royal Academy of Arts in London. Then follow twenty-seven

clauses providing for the constitution and government, and nominating the original members. Among the main clauses of the instrument is one expressly declaring that the members of the Royal Academy shall not be members of any other society of artists established in London—a provision palpably directed against the Incorporated Society and the new directorate which had usurped the place of the old. The effect of this stringent clause is to exclude from the new Academy such men as Romney, the King's own painter Allan Ramsay, the veteran Hudson, and others of less note, besides the accomplished engravers, Robert Strange and Woollett. Curiously enough, Gainsborough's name does not appear in the first official list of members; yet, in the body of the catalogue, the initials R.A. are appended to his name.

The following is a list of the first members of the Academy taken from the catalogue to the first exhibition :—

"Sir Joshua Reynolds, Knt., President; Sir Wm. Chambers, Knight of the Polar Star, Treasurer; George Michael Moser, Keeper; Francis Milner Newton, Secretary; Edward Penny, Professor of Painting; Thomas Sandby, Professor of Architecture; Samuel Wale, Professor of Perspective; William Hunter, M.D., Professor of Anatomy; Francis Hayman, Librarian; (Tan-Chet-Tua, a Chinese modeller, not one of the Academicians*); George Barrett; Francesco Bartolozzi: Edward Burch; Agostino Carlini; Charles Catton; Mason Chamberlin; J. Baptist Cipriani; Richard Cosway; John Gwynn; William Hoare; Nathaniel Hone; Mrs Angelica Kauffmann; Jeremiah Meyer; Mrs Mary Moser; Joseph

* He appears to have held the rank of an Honorary Royal Academician.

Nollekens; John Richards; Paul Sandby; Domenick Serres; Peter Toms; William Tyler; Benj. West; Richard Wilson; Joseph Wilton; Richard Yeo; John Zoffanii; Francesco Zuccarelli."

It will be seen that this list, while containing the names of a certain number of painters of eminence, with Sir Joshua, *facile princeps*, at their head, included also some conspicuously inferior performers. The mere fact that no less than seven foreigners—including the fascinating Angelica, Cipriani, Bartolozzi, Zoffany, and Zuccarelli—were to be found in it, goes far to prove that there cannot, in the beginning, have been any particular enthusiasm to join the ranks of the new body; that is to say, outside the nucleus of the promoters, who had not only the stimulus of an undoubted benefit to be conferred on painters, students, and the public, but a vengeance to take, or—if the phrase be preferred—an execution to accomplish on the corporate person of the offending Society.

Although the instrument prescribes forty as the number of the Royal Academicians—a magic figure which, in imitation of other similarly-constituted academic bodies, has since been adhered to—only thirty-six were named at first, and the list was not completed until 1772.

Before the opening of the first exhibition, Reynolds must have received from the well-satisfied monarch the honour of knighthood,* seeing that, as we perceive from the list just given, he is entered as "Sir Joshua Reynolds, Knt., President."

The part played by him in these final negotiations might, perhaps, by the unsympathetic, be severely judged as that of a trimmer willing to reap the benefits

* He was actually knighted on April 21st 1769 at the levee.

of the situation, without bearing the brunt of the battle, and anxious, up to the last, to leave a back door open for escape. Still it must be remembered, on the other side, that Sir Joshua owed nothing to the Incorporated Society, which, on the contrary, owed mainly to his splendid series of canvases the vogue which its exhibitions had in so short a time acquired. And, further, apart from the considerations of dignity and delicacy which may have restrained him from pushing to the front in a matter in which the King was so closely concerned, it should be borne in mind that the master had attained a position, both artistic and social, which was widely different from that occupied by any of his brothers in art.

He might well hesitate where others were prepared to plunge, he might well decline to risk appearing before the public, before his circle of much-prized friends and supporters, as an unsuccessful conspirator in a matter in which he—then by common consent at the head of his profession—had really nothing beyond a high-sounding title and an official status to gain. He might thus very fairly allow himself to be borne along by the force of events towards a desired goal, and yet not care to make any sacrifice, or incur any risk to attain it. It was, nevertheless, a great triumph for him, and one which he may have legitimately enjoyed, although we have just seen him making a prudent and genteel resistance, *pour la forme*. He was acclaimed a little against his outwardly-expressed will, but not against his true inclination; much as revolutionary cohorts might acclaim, on their own initiative, a generalissimo of their choice.

That the King, too, who had always politely cold-shouldered the artist whom his foremost subjects delighted

to honour, should, nevertheless, at once perceive, and acquiesce in, the necessity for placing him at the head of an Academy of Arts, brought into sudden existence by royal sanction, and by that alone, must have been an additional gratification. And then Sir Joshua, though he never fell into the pitfall of pomposity, or assumed an attitude of outward dignity, loved the great world, even though he loved its better, wider side, and loved it as an equal, not as a dependent. And this addition of official status, this high and well-defined position, rendering representation, on behalf of the powerful corporate body of which he was the head, a necessity—this newly-created obligation to direct the destinies of a body of brother-artists—must have appeared to him as a pleasing, if a serious, burden. He would feel himself peculiarly well prepared, both by nature and by acquired usage, to discharge such duties, and their performance would constitute a welcome change from the inevitable strain imposed upon him by the sustained practice of his profession.

It was in accordance with the suggestion of Sir Joshua, here again following the tradition of foreign academies, that certain distinguished men of letters, for the most part in his immediate circle, were appointed (not all, however, in the first place) to honorary posts of distinction in connection with the Academy. Dr Francklin, the Professor of Greek at Cambridge, was named Chaplain; Dr Johnson, whom we have already seen acting semi-officially for the Incorporated Society, was Professor of Ancient Literature—a title which must have appeared then much less incongruous in connection with the arts than it does now. Goldsmith was Professor of Ancient History, and, in accepting the barren if honourable post, he evidently thought that he was quite as much conferring as receiving

a favour. He made characteristically humorous reference to his hand-to-mouth position, too, in saying that honours to a man in his situation were like ruffles to a man who had no shirt. Richard Dalton, the King's Librarian, was Antiquary to the new Society, and, as Foreign Secretary or Correspondent, Joseph Baretti afterwards officiated.

This busy rhymer, satirist, lexicographer, and man of letters generally, had at the period now reached won the friendship, not only of Johnson, with whom he had for some years been connected by close bonds of friendship, but of Reynolds, Burke, Garrick, and the intellectual *élite* of their set. The curious incident of his trial for murder, presently to be recounted, arousing, as it did, the enthusiastic interest of his friends, furnishes convincing evidence of the high esteem in which he was held.

He had, in the first instance, after a chequered career as a peripatetic man of letters in Italy, found his way to England in 1751, when he opened a school to teach Italian. The work by which he is best known, and which indeed has survived down to our own time, is the *Italian and English Dictionary*, published in 1760, with a dedication written by Dr Johnson. After another interval of six years, passed in Italy, during which his satirical publication *La Frusta Letteraria*, published under the pseudonym of Aristarco Scannabue, got him into irremediable disgrace, Baretti returned to England in 1766, when he was warmly welcomed by the circle, and especially by Johnson, who had, during his absence, maintained a correspondence with him on a footing of affectionate regard. It is *à propos* of his Italian friend's *Account of the Manners and Customs of Italy* that the Pontifex Maximus of the set says :—

> His account of Italy is a very entertaining book, and,

sir, I know no man who carries his head higher than Baretti. There are strong powers in his mind. He has not indeed many hooks, but with what hooks he has he grapples very forcibly."

Happy as were thus the beginnings of the new Society, and resistless as was its advance under the royal ægis, notwithstanding the very natural hostility of the Incorporated Society, it will not do to think of it at first as the exalted and awe-inspiring institution that it now is. The first quarters of the Academy were at Dalton's Print Warehouse, formerly Lamb's Auction-Rooms, in Pall Mall, immediately adjacent to Old Carlton House. In 1771 the King granted to the Academy the use of apartments in Old Somerset Palace, to give lectures and house their library, but the Pall Mall Auction-Rooms continued to hold the annual exhibitions until 1780, when the Academy was definitively installed at Somerset House, a portion of which had for the purpose been practically rebuilt by one of their most prominent members, Sir Wm. Chambers.

Sir Joshua had, from the beginning, taken his duties very seriously, and had been indefatigable in his efforts to organise the society over which he was called to preside. He pronounced, on the 2nd of January 1769, his initial Discourse, addressed to the members of the new Royal Academy on its opening. With this, as with the remaining fourteen of the series, and the literary work of the master generally, it has been found more convenient to deal in a separate and final chapter of this volume.

It would appear that the well-rounded Johnsonian periods of the President were much sacrificed in the delivery, which was low and indistinct; the elocution—a

strange thing for the friend of Burke and Garrick—being imperfect and monotonous.

The first exhibition was opened on the 26th of April and closed on the 27th of May, and consisted of 136 works, the appropriate inscription on the catalogue being "*Nova rerum nascitur ordo*," first of a long series of singularly well-chosen quotations. There are mentioned among the attractions of the display, apart from the President's contributions, Gainsborough's "Lady Molyneux"; Cotes's "Hebe," "Portrait of the Duke of Gloucester," and "Boy playing Cricket;" Angelica Kauffmann's "Hector and Andromache," and "Venus directing Æneas and Achates;" Nathaniel Dance's portraits of the King and Queen; Nathaniel Hone's "Piping Boy;" Cipriani's "Annunciation;" and Benjamin West's "Venus lamenting the Death of Adonis," and "The Departure of Regulus."

To this last canvas a certain celebrity attaches, quite independently of its pictorial merits or demerits. The subject was one which the King, not a little proud of his scholarship, had suggested to the lucky Quaker painter; even condescending himself to read to his favourite the descriptive passage in *Livy*, of which it was intended to be the illustration. When the picture was brought to the palace for the royal approval, the new President of the Incorporated Society of Artists, Joshua Kirby, who was also, as has been noted, the King's instructor in perspective, happened to be present. As in duty bound, he followed his royal master in praise of it, expressing the hope that His Majesty would graciously permit the picture to be shown at the exhibition. "Certainly, certainly," replied the King. "The Exhibition of the Incorporated Society of Artists," added Kirby. "No, no, no!" replied His Majesty, "the Exhibition of *my* Royal Academy!" We

are told that poor Kirby was thunderstruck, and retired in speechless mortification from the royal presence; some even going so far as to attribute to the shock which he experienced his death not very long afterwards. In truth, the scene is a high-comedy *coup de théâtre* of the first order, with which it is not a little curious to connect the naïve, earnest, and somewhat stolid young King. Notwithstanding the vague promises of equal support given by the royal patron, this is the death-knell of the elder society, which henceforth, struggle as it may, will languish, go on intermittently for another twenty odd years, then flicker out and expire.

Sir Joshua's own contribution to the first exhibition consisted of four fanciful portraits, in three of which the mythological element predominated, while to the fourth a sort of elegiac flavour was, by artificial means, imparted.

The four canvases were:—"The Duchess of Manchester and her Son, as Diana disarming Cupid;" "Mrs Blake (*née* Bunbury) as Juno receiving the Cestus from Venus;" "Miss Morris as Hope nursing Love;" "Mrs Bouverie and Mrs Crewe" (known also as the "*Et in Arcadia ego*").

It must be conceded that the attitude of the Duchess Diana disarming Cupid Mandeville is a very strained and awkward one; and that Mrs Blake bears herself somewhat stiffly and timidly under the weight of her usurped honours, and appears by no means convinced of her aptitude for the crushing *rôle* of the Queen of Heaven.

In the sickly symbolism—at the moment the high fashion—of these classical allegories, it is permissible to suspect a certain influence exerted, perhaps unconsciously, by Angelica Kauffmann on her staunch friend and admirer; not, indeed, on his immeasurably superior art, but on his mode of conception. The famous portrait of the two beauties and fast friends, Mrs Crewe and Mrs Bouverie, is

one of Sir Joshua's most fascinating performances, but it would lose nothing by the elimination of the classic tomb with the inscription on its plinth which, strangely enough, puzzled the learned Johnson—as unmeaning and insipid here as it is infinitely pathetic in Poussin's great pastoral, to which, in its connection with this picture, reference has already been made. Sir Joshua had already painted the lovely Mrs Crewe—that enthusiastic Whig, and friend of Burke, Fox, Sheridan, and the painter himself—with her youthful brother, when she was sixteen and still Miss Greville, in the picture known as "Cupid and Psyche;" he painted her again (in 1772) as St Geneviève, reading, surrounded by her flock.

To 1769 must belong the execution of the superb "Mrs Edward Bouverie with her Child," which was at Delapré Abbey, and is one of the chief ornaments of the Earl of Radnor's collection at Longford Castle (engraved in mezzotint by James Watson in 1770). The fair sitter appears in the Pocket-Book in April 1767, and again in March 1768, when, however, she was, in all probability, posing for the portrait-group with Mrs Crewe just referred to. We find her posing again in February 1769—doubtless for this work. The picture, notwithstanding its important dimensions and exceptional beauty does not appear to have found its way into any exhibition more recent than that of the Old Masters in 1876, and therefore does not perhaps enjoy, with the general public, quite as high a reputation as it deserves. It shows the beauty, in clinging, generalised draperies, of more or less classic mould, playing with the child supported on her knee—a motive which Sir Joshua may well have adapted and humanised from some Italian "Madonna and Child" of the sixteenth or seventeenth century—thus exercising that royal right of appropria-

tion which has so often been a characteristic of artists of the highest rank. Still, if he has borrowed, he has completely transformed and made his own the familiar theme of the picture. It is less striking at first sight, with its cool tonality, in which yellow, bluish-grey, and green predominate, than such later works as the "Lady Cockburn with her Children," the "Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, with her Child," or others of the same class that could be named. It has rather the natural daylight colouring than the rich, tawny hues — something between Rembrandt and Rubens —of these last. It possesses, on the other hand, notwithstanding some mannerism, the charm of a greater spontaneity, and is relatively free from that self-consciousness which certainly does not lend additional attraction to the charms of the last-named splendid dames, who are a thought too much aware that their maternal duties are being performed to an admiring gallery. The form of the lady is, to satisfy the peculiar taste of the moment, unduly elongated, but the modelling of the two vivacious heads, and the disposition of the elaborate draperies, is as good as anything that could be pointed to in the work of the master. By the way, the statement that the robe was once a warm rose, and has now become a chilly purple, is erroneous ; * the painting has, on the whole, fairly well maintained its original colouring and tonality, and is, for a Sir Joshua, in unusually good condition.

More than ever at this happy time, when the master, still in the prime of life, had achieved, with general acclamation, the highest position if not even

* The actual colour-scheme of the picture as it stands is as follows :— Mrs Bouverie's inner robe is pale yellow, with a crimson waistband ; the outer robe, or drapery, is bluish-grey ; and the drapery on which she sits, green with a dash of blue in it.

yet the highest point of maturity in his art, does he appear to have sought relief from his sustained exertions in the practice of his profession, in dinners, routs, and social gatherings of all kinds. Among those whose hospitalities were most frequently accepted were the Hornecks, Goldsmith, and Wilkes, besides many prominent members of learned, artistic and fashionable circles, with whom Sir Joshua's friendship was of a more formal character. There were dinners, for example, with the brother academicians, Penny, Chambers, Hayman, and Hone, and also—an instance of good feeling on both sides—with the master's former teacher, Hudson, and with Allan Ramsay, neither of whom had cast his lot with the new and all-encroaching Society. Sir Joshua does not even stop short at such ultra-fashionable diversions as masquerades, at Mrs Cornely's in Soho Square and at the opera-house, or visits to the Richmond assembly, and to Vauxhall itself, then one of the most brilliant and outwardly decorous places of entertainment in Europe, and resembling rather the sumptuous casinos of the German and French watering-places (with a good dose of fine-art superadded) than its own dubious and dingy successors in London—themselves now long since swept away.

As a typical instance of the quieter and more intimate social gathering bringing together some members of what may be termed the inner Reynolds circle, may be mentioned the dinner at Boswell's lodgings on the 16th of October 1769, at which were present Sir Joshua, Garrick, Goldsmith, Murphy, Bickerstaff, and Tom Davies, the bookseller and critic in a small way. Here the great lexicographer is, for him, in a benignant and little aggressive mood, and Goldsmith with the most naïve and childlike vanity struts about, inviting the admiration of the company for

his famous bloom-coloured coat, and immortalising by his recommendation his tailor, Mr John Filby, at the Harrow in Water Lane. It is on this occasion that Dr Johnson is led, by his love of paradox and contradiction, to make the most enormous of all his enormous assertions,—the one that Congreve's description of the temple in the "Mourning Bride" is the finest poetical passage he has ever read, and that he recollects none in Shakespeare equal to it. Were there not on record other enormities, hardly less startling, to keep this one in company, one would be inclined to suspect that Bozzy was here treating the conversation of his divinity much as Messieurs de Goncourt, in their reports of the famous dinners at which they periodically met Ste. Beuve and Théophile Gautier—and Renan, treated that of these great literary celebrities; that is, that he was reporting the conversation as he understood it, or such parts of it only as came within his powers of comprehension.

It is here, too, that the first evidence of Johnson's smouldering hostility against Mrs Montagu, the Queen of the Blue Stockings, peeps out—a hostility which was not, however, to burst into open flame until some twelve years later. Reynolds hazards the remark that the learned lady's *Essay on Shakespeare*, written to traverse Voltaire's criticisms, "does her honour;" upon which the literary dictator says: "Yes, sir, it does her honour, but it would do nobody else honour. . . ." "No, sir, there is no real criticism in it. . . ." More scathing is the great man's rejoinder—on its being related that Mrs Montagu, in an excess of compliment to the author of a modern tragedy, had exclaimed: "I tremble for Shakespeare." "When Shakespeare has got ——— for his rival and Mrs Montagu for his defender, he is in a poor state indeed!" There is, indeed, something inexpressibly ludicrous in this grave pat-

ting on the back, this rehabilitation of Shakespeare by the fashionable *Arthénice* who has, self-crowned, assumed the sovereignty of the British *Précieuses;* she calmly puts Monsieur de Voltaire in his place, and, if she achieves nothing more, manages to excite the professional jealousy of Johnson.

As bearing upon the misadventure of Baretti, next to be related, the turn taken by the conversation, on October 19th at Boswell's lodgings, with regard to our feeling for the distresses of others, is especially interesting:—

"*Johnson.*—'Why, sir, there is much noise made about it, but it is greatly exaggerated. No, sir, we have a certain degree of feeling to prompt us to do good; more than that Providence does not intend. It would be misery to no purpose.'

"*Boswell.*—'But suppose now, sir, that one of your intimate friends was apprehended for an offence for which he might be hanged.'

"*Johnson.*—'I should do what I could to bail him, and give him any other assistance; but if he were once fairly hanged, I should not suffer.'

"*Boswell.*—'Would you eat your dinner that day, sir?'

"*Johnson.*—'Yes, sir, and eat it as if he were eating with me. Why, there's Baretti, who is to be tried for his life to-morrow, friends have risen up for him on every side; yet, if he should be hanged, none of them will eat a slice of plum-pudding the less. Sir, that sympathetic feeling goes a very little way in depressing the mind.'"

Which curious mixture of profound truth, seasoned with cynical paradox, is the more surprising, as coming from the man whose overflowing love and tenderness for his friends and dependents is *the* quality which must secure the pardon, and enforce the respect, of those

who find themselves insufficiently impressed either by the vastness—rather, perhaps, the weightiness—of his literary power, or by the forceful aggressiveness of his character.

Baretti had been importuned by a woman of the town, in the Haymarket, on the night of the 6th of October, and brushing her out of the way, was set upon by her bullies, who proceeded to hustle him. Prompt with cold steel, like most of his countrymen, the quick-tempered Italian drew a small knife, and, being further pressed, struck with it two of the ruffians, one of whom afterwards died of his wound. The unfortunate homicide at once submitted to arrest, and Sir Joshua, Fitzherbert, Burke, and Garrick were accepted as his bail; while, in addition to these, Johnson, Goldsmith, and Beauclerk gave testimony in his favour, and especially as to his near-sightedness. According to Mrs Thrale, when Johnson and Burke visited Baretti in his prison, and endeavoured to comfort him, and yet to let it be understood that he stood in great danger of his life—"What can *he* fear," said the savant, placing himself between them, and grasping one hand of each in his—"that holds two such hands as I do." He was acquitted, and must have owed his escape in a large measure to the various and powerful influences brought to bear in his favour, since many a good man was, in those days, hanged for a less matter.

It was after his acquittal that Baretti obtained, through the influence of Sir Joshua, the post of Foreign Secretary to the Academy, in connection with which his name has already been mentioned. His famous portrait by our master, in the Holland House collection, was not painted until 1774 when—again through the kind offices of Sir Joshua—he had been appointed

to the post of private tutor in the Thrale family. It was done for Mr Thrale's notable collection of the portraits of his friends, and is one of Sir Joshua's masterpieces—one of those rare pieces of penetrating characterisation which tempt us to prefer his portraiture of men even to his most gracious presentments of female loveliness.

The author of the *Italian Dictionary* is quite simply depicted, in an attitude peculiarly appropriate to the man of letters; he appears seated, holding with a critical air a book very close to his eyes—those short-sighted eyes which did him such good service at the time of his trial. There is absolutely no attempt here to make a dramatic picture, or to step outside the limits of the portrait proper, and yet the peculiar force and unity of the man's character are revealed with unsurpassed power. *Rageur* that he was, always tilting at some enemy or rival, always ready to declare war and carry it into the enemy's camp, it must have been this force, this peculiarly Italian intensity, that nevertheless imposed itself upon the illustrious circle of friends whom we have just seen grouped around him.

Mrs Thrale, though certainly not to be ranked as a writer of polished or elegant verse, was, as she has conclusively proved in the series of short poems written on the Streatham portraits, one of the best judges of character of her time; and the acidulated flavour of these audacious little effusions, the well-marked tendency to scratch which they reveal, must not blind us to this fact. Not all the gossip of the memoirs in which the time is so prolific, not all the diverting, sour-sweet comment of Horace Walpole's letters, shows up the personages concerned, as do the dedicatory verses of the Lady of Streatham; and it will be borne in mind that the parlour of the hospitable brewer, to whom we owe the incomparably interesting series of portraits now scattered in every direction, contained in counterfeit

presentment the intellectual *élite* of the country and the time. Frances Burney has the freshest, liveliest talent for placing human beings before us in the flesh, for making them live and move as, with a cunning naturalness, she evokes them for our amusement ; but even she could not, or at any rate did not, dive as deep into their essential individuality as her brilliant friend and protectress showed herself able to do.

Here are Mrs Thrale's lines to the Baretti portrait :—

> " Baretti hangs next, by his frowns you may know him,
> He has lately been reading some new published poem ;
> He finds the poor author a blockhead, a beast,
> A fool, without sentiment, judgment, or taste.
> Ever thus let our critic his insolence fling,
> Like the hornet in Homer, impatient to sting,
> Let him rally his friends for their frailties before 'em,
> And scorn the dull praise of that dull king decorum ;
> While tenderness, temper, and truth he despises,
> And only the triumph of victory prizes.
> Yet let us be candid, and where shall we find
> So active, so able, so ardent a mind ;
> To your children more soft, more polite to your servant,
> More firm in distress, or in friendship more fervent ? "

It was on the 11th of December 1769, on the occasion of the first distribution of prizes to the students of the Royal Academy, that the President's Second Discourse was delivered, and thenceforth, to 1772 inclusive, a like Discourse marked and dignified this special occasion ; after which, down to the period of his retirement, these lectures were delivered on alternate years. Mauritius Lowe, Cipriani's pupil and Johnson's ne'er-do-well *protégé*, carried off the gold medal for painting, which, according to Northcote, he owed to the Italian contingent in the Academy, who were determined that a pupil of their fellow-countryman should win. John Bacon took the like medal for sculpture, and

Flaxman, then a recently-admitted student, a silver medal only, for a study from the model.

The often-repeated anecdote, given by Northcote with regard to the robbery committed on the person of Sir Joshua's black servant, is too significant, as illustrating the peculiar mansuetude and the helpful charity of the master, to be entirely passed over. Reading casually in a newspaper that a man was then in Newgate, condemned to death for a robbery committed on the person of this very negro, he interrogated the latter, and found, to his astonishment, that Miss Anne Williams, Dr Johnson's old and blind pensioner, having dined at the house with Miss Reynolds, he had been ordered to attend her back to Bolt Court, and on returning had loitered with some companions until he was barred out of the house. Giving up the attempt to obtain an entrance, he wandered about the street, and, taking shelter in a watch-house, fell asleep and was robbed of his watch and money. He gave the alarm and the thief was taken with the booty about him, was tried, found guilty, and condemned to be hanged. Sir Joshua, upon hearing this, sent food and clothes to the condemned man awaiting death in his filthy cell; then, through Burke, procured the capital sentence to be commuted to one of transportation for life; and finally, before the convict was shipped off, supplied him with further necessaries.

The portrait-study of this negro (attributed to the year 1767) was No. 15 in the Reynolds Exhibition at the Grosvenor Gallery, which also contained (No. 42) a like study, said to be that of Frank Barber, Dr Johnson's faithful black servant, who attended him down to the last hours of his life, and became his residuary legatee.

CHAPTER V.

Opposite Politics represented in The Club—Origin of the "Ugolino"—Second Exhibition of Royal Academy, 1770—"The Archers"—"Children in the Wood"—Goldsmith's "Deserted Village" dedicated to Sir Joshua—The Master again visits Devonshire—Extracts from Diary—Field Sports—Theophila and Mary Palmer—Dilettanti Portrait of Reynolds—The Academy occupies New Apartments at Somerset House—Sir Joshua's Dinner-Parties at Leicester Fields—Courtenay's and Malone's Accounts—Falsely accused of Parsimony—More Excursions into the great world—Polly Kennedy—Death of Francis Cotes—Exhibition of 1771—"Nymph and Bacchus"—"Resignation"—Benjamin West's "Death of Wolfe"—It makes a Revolution in Historical Art—Sir Joshua again in Paris—Northcote describes Reynolds working up Draperies—Portrait of Joseph Banks—Dunning—Exhibition of 1772—Zoffany's "Portraits of Royal Academicians"—De Loutherbourg—The Thrales—The Streatham Circle—Mrs Thrale's Lines on Sir Joshua—He is elected Alderman of Plympton—*She Stoops to Conquer* produced—Goldsmith and Northcote—Exhibition of 1773—Sir Joshua's Twelve Pictures—"Strawberry Girl"—"Count Ugolino and his Children"—Reynolds and Imaginative Art—Dr Beattie's Allegorical Portrait—Reynolds elected Mayor of Plympton.

THIS particular time saw most of Sir Joshua's intimates busily engaged in political matters, and often on opposite sides. It speaks well for the affectionate character of the friendship which united them, that the harmony of The Club does not appear to have been materially disturbed by the diametrically opposite character of the views represented by its members. For one burning question there was the great constitutional one of the Middlesex Election. Wilkes was more than ever the popular

hero of the hour, the tribune of the people, whom the City of London, and dauntless William Beckford, its Lord Mayor, especially delighted to honour. Johnson had, in his pamphlet, *A False Alarm*, given the ministers his out-and-out-support, by maintaining that Wilkes's expulsion from the House implied and included incapacity for re-election to the same Parliament which had cast him forth. Burke, as always, on the side of constitutionalism, had published *Thoughts on the Present Discontents*, in support of the contention of the opposition, and lent the aid of his majestic oratory to the same view in the House of Commons. Still more interesting to The Club must have been the question of the authorship of the Junius Letters. Sir Joshua, who had better opportunities of knowing than most men of his times, disbelieved in the Burke theory, and, as he afterwards told Malone, looked upon Samuel Dyer, whose portrait he painted for Burke, as the veritable author of the Letters—surmising, however, that he had been assisted in their composition by both Edmund and William Burke.

Leslie and Taylor, in contradiction to Northcote, assert, and go far to prove, that the famous "Ugolino"—the most ambitious and, on the whole, the most successful of Sir Joshua's high-art compositions—was planned, and in part begun, in this year 1770, although not exhibited until 1773. Northcote has surmised, with some probability, that the first idea of the subject developed itself in Sir Joshua's mind from an observation of Burke or Goldsmith, that the old model White was exactly suited in expression to the Ugolino of Dante. This may, no doubt, as the more modern biographers appear to hold, have recalled to our master's mind Richardson's *Discourses*, containing a translation of this, the most tremendous episode in the *Inferno*, and a description of what the theorising painter-author and

the biographers call "Michael Angelo's bas-relief of the scene in the dungeon"*—with the suggestion that a great painter might carry the subject still further.

For an entertaining account of the famous masquerade given at Mrs Cornely's room in Soho Square, on the 26th of February 1770, see the elaborate footnote (Vol. I. p. 355) of Leslie and Taylor's biography. Sir Joshua attended it in company with some of the members of the Dilletanti Society and the Star and Garter Club, and it is by no means improbable that he may have condescended to give hints as to their costume to some of the fair masqueraders, such as Her Grace of Ancaster, who appeared as Mandane; the Duchess of Bolton, who supported the character of Diana; the Countess of Pomfret, who showed as a Greek Sultana; or the Earl of Upper Ossory, who masqueraded as a Cardinal.

The Second Exhibition of the Royal Academy was opened to the public on the 24th of April, and was visited by the King on the 20th and 28th of April.

Sir Joshua showed:—"Lord Sydney and Colonel Acland as Archers"; the portrait of Mrs Bouverie of Delapré, already referred to at length; "Miss Price," as a little shepherdess; a half-length of "Lady Cornwallis;" "The Children in the Wood;" the companion-portraits of Johnson and Goldsmith, already described, and a similar portrait of Colman.

This fanciful portrait-group, "The Archers" (at the Old Masters in 1881), shows the two young men named in the act of shooting at red deer, the former in a green coat edged with gold, and breeches of the same colour, with a scarf round his waist—the latter in a red dress. There is, in the chief motive, a certain

* This often repeated relief is really by an imitator of the great Florentine, Pierino Vinci.

reminiscence of the famous Michelangelesque design "Shooting at a Mark," now in the royal collection of drawings at Windsor, and the fresco adaptation from which (falsely attributed to Raphael) Sir Joshua may have seen at the Roman villa whence it was afterwards removed to the Borghese Gallery.

This is, apparently, not the version of the "Babes in the Wood" exhibited at the Winter Exhibition of the Royal Academy in 1880, in which the children are described as portraits of the children of Benjamin Van der Gucht, a somewhat later friend of the master. In this last-named canvas the babes are living, and appear, seated in a wood, attired in white frocks.

In another version, which appeared in the same place in 1871, and is most probably the picture first shown on the occasion now under consideration, the hapless innocents are dead, or sleeping the sleep which precedes death; but even here the painter has not taken his theme too tragically.

The origin of this last painting is, according to Northcote, as follows:—

"One of the pretty beggar children, whom Sir Joshua had, according to his wont, captured in the street, had fallen asleep in sheer exhaustion during a long sitting, and in so natural and beautiful an attitude that the painter put away the study he was engaged upon, and took up a fresh canvas. After he had begun to sketch the little model as it lay, it moved, so as to alter its posture, upon which, the master moved his canvas to make the change greater, and, pursuing the conception which had suddenly suggested itself, sketched the child once more."

Gainsborough displayed his powers at the exhibition,

both as a portrait and a landscape-painter; Zoffany showed the admirably characterised "Garrick as Abel Drugger, with Subtle and Face," which was contributed by the Earl of Carlisle to the recent Guelph Exhibition. Sir Joshua, ever generous and appreciative to his brother artists, had purchased the reminiscence of his friend's famous impersonation of the "tobacco-man" in Ben Jonson's *Alchemist* for a hundred guineas. Lord Carlisle, half an hour afterwards, offered Reynolds twenty to part with it, which the knight generously refused, resigning his intended purchase to the noble lord, and the profit to his brother artist.

Angelica Kauffmann sent four subjects—all of them the highest of the high—including a subject from Klopstock's portentous "Messiah"—"The Demoniac weeping over her Murdered Child."

Simultaneously with the appearance of Goldsmith's portrait at the Academy comes out his poem, "The Deserted Village," the dedication of which to Sir Joshua is so touching in its simplicity, so unlike the well-rounded, ceremonious, and meaningless dedications of the time, that to omit it would be to deprive our master of one of the most affecting pieces of testimony in his favour:—

"I can have no expectations," writes the poet, "in an address of this kind, either to add to your reputation or to establish my own. You can gain nothing from my admiration, as I am ignorant of the art in which you are said to excel, and I may lose much by the severity of your judgment, as few have a juster taste in poetry than you. Setting interest, therefore, aside—to which I never paid much attention—I must be indulged at present in following my affections. The only dedication I ever made was to my brother, because I loved him better than

most other men. He is since dead. Permit me to inscribe this poem to you."

The poem attained wide and immediate popularity, and, before the end of August, reached a fifth edition.

The master had sittings at this time of the King and Queen at Buckingham House, in fulfilment of the understanding that, if he accepted the Presidency of the Royal Academy, he should be allowed to paint their portraits—in making which condition a *sine quâ non*, Sir Joshua with proper moderation and dignity marked his sense of the cold usage he had received from George III., and his appreciation of his own unassailable position in his profession.

In September and October Sir Joshua was once more among his friends and patrons in Devonshire, enjoying well-earned relaxation, dining at all the pleasant houses in the county, and, what is more, hunting and partridge-shooting with evident zest, though whether in strictly orthodox fashion does not appear.

Extracts from the Diary.

"September 7th.—Five o'clock, set out for Devonshire.

"8th.—Dined with Lord Pembroke; lay at Blandford.

"9th, Sunday.—Dorchester, fine prospect; Bridport, Axminster.

"10th.—Saltram, at one.

"11th.—Seven, hunting.

"12th.—Ride to Plym-bridge; three, Mount Edgecumbe.

"13th.—Hunting.

"14th.—Partridge-shooting.

"15th.—Hunting.

"16th.—Sunday.—Church, Plympton St Mary, Burrington.

"17th.—Set out from Saltram, arrived at Torrington.
"20th.—Returned to Saltram.
"21st.—Hunting.
"22d.—Plympton.
"23rd.—Sunday.—The Dock and P." (Plymouth.)

The following memorandum is written in lead pencil on a blank leaf of the pocket-book :—

"Mr Parker bets Sir Joshua five guineas that he does not beat Mr Robinson ; and ten guineas that Mr Montagu does not beat Mr Parker ; to shoot with Mr Treby's bullet gun at 100 yards distance ; and a sheet of paper to be put up, and the person who shoots nearest the centre wins.

"October 5th.—To dine with Mr Mudge.
"6th.—
"7th.—Set out from Saltram, arrived at Torrington.
"8th.—Dined at Mr Palmer's.
"9th.—Dined at Mr Young's.
"10th.—Left Torrington, arrived at Exeter, and went to Whiteway.
"11th.—Dined at Mamhead, Lord Lisburn.
"12th.—Set out from Whiteway ; dined at Exeter with Bob (his brother) ; arrived at Axminster.
"13th.—Salisbury—Andover.
"14th.—Dined in London."

What cannot fail to surprise the reader who has followed Sir Joshua's career down to this period with any attention, is the zest with which the painter whose well-filled life compels him to be a cockney, and leaves no time for exercise or relaxation while there is daylight, enters all of a sudden into the field-sports of his entertainers, and, it may be guessed, acquits himself sufficiently well not to

appear ridiculous by the side of the men who devote their lives to such amusements. The surmise is a fair and natural one, that in our painter's early life, before he migrated from Devonshire, there must have been a larger place made for sport than any facts within the knowledge of his biographers authorise them to assume.

It was on this occasion that, while on a visit to Torrington, Sir Joshua conceived the idea of bringing his niece, Theophila—so well-known to those who are familiar with the master's art and his circle as "Offie"—to live with him in London. She and her elder sister, Mary, were the daughters of Reynolds's widowed sister, Mrs Palmer, to whom, in earlier life, he had been under great obligations.

Theophila, with the exception of a short interval at the end of 1773, and a longer one later on, remained with her uncle until she married Mr Gwatkin—gladdening his house with the sunshine of her pretty presence, and making herself also infinitely useful as a model on occasions where demureness and *naïveté* were required. It is, perhaps, to her entrance into the household, and her appearance in many shapes, and under many designations on the canvases of her uncle, that may be traced a certain excessive development of his style in the direction of archness and of a would-be Arcadian simplicity, which, though far indeed from the false innocence, the insidiousness of the contemporary Greuze, is by no means free from the element of a certain disturbing self-consciousness. Mary Palmer, with the exception of an interval of three years, resided with her uncle from 1773 until his death, and, as will be seen, inherited from him the bulk of his fortune.

On the 11th of December 1770 the gold and silver medals awarded in the preceding year were distributed by the President, who on this occasion delivered his Third Discourse.

To 1770 belongs the admirably personal and spirited portrait of the master, by himself, belonging to the Dilettanti Society, and which has, until quite recently, been lent by its owners to the National Gallery. Sir Joshua has here depicted himself in a loose red robe—not, however, the doctor's robe in the Uffizi and Royal Academy pictures—and wears his own hair; the half-tones of the flesh have faded somewhat, but the modelling is admirable, and the picture on the whole in very good condition—for a Reynolds. The kindly face shows traces of fatigue, yet the aspect is, for the President's age of forty-seven, one of youthfulness and vigour. It is to be remarked, however, that neither in this nor in any of the other portraits of himself which Sir Joshua, emulating *longo intervallo* Rembrandt, has given to the world, do we get an adequate suggestion of that tranquil benignity, of that singular equableness of temperament, which those who have sought to solve the problem of his true personality would select as his most striking characteristic.

Rembrandt, by whose mode of conception and practice in self-portraiture the English master has, throughout his career, proved himself deeply impressed, has shown more penetration, or, at any rate, more revelation of self, in the joyous, ardent presentments of his youth and early manhood, in the vigorous but saddened pictures of his middle age, and in the infinitely pathetic canvases of the last period, in which he reveals himself so faithfully in his solitude, his misery, his physical decadence.

It was on the 14th of January 1771 that the Royal Academy took possession of the new apartments planned for them by Sir William Chambers in Somerset House. They faced the river, from which they were separated by a garden, and included lodgings for the keeper, a

well as a library, schools, and a council-room, but the exhibitions were still held at the by no means sumptuous gallery of Pall Mall.

It is better to think of Chambers as the skilful designer and constructor of this, one of the best English buildings that the latter half of the 18th century has given us, and even as the inventor of the classic temples and oriental fantasies of Kew—though the latter have been irreverently described as "unmeaning falbalas of Turkish and Chinese chequer-work"—than as the author of that unfortunate literary venture, the *Dissertation on Oriental Gardening* (with its lovely frontispiece by Cipriani and Bartolozzi). This last, it may be remembered, brought down upon him those flagellations in verse "An heroic Epistle to Sir W. C.," and "An heroic Postscript"—both now known to be by William Mason, Horace Walpole's and Reynolds's friend, and the author of the *English Garden.*

The Diploma Gallery of the Royal Academy contains an agreeable reminiscence, by Zoffany, of its occupancy of Somerset House, which most probably, however, dates from the more complete taking possession in 1780. This is a representation by night of the Academy's school of casts and models, with students drawing from famous works, among which we recognise the Apollo Belvedere, the Diskobolos of Naucydes, the so-called Cincinnatus, the Borghese Gladiator, and the Torso, which must ever recall the praise lavished upon it by Michelangelo, and, following him, by Sir Joshua himself. The casts here shown, no doubt, include those presented by the Duke of Richmond when his well-meant but abortive enterprise came to an end, and especially those obtained by Moser from the old school in St Martin's Lane (of which he had been director), under circumstances of which the Incorporated Society bitterly complained in their pamphlet

published against the Royal Academy. Zoffany's picture is probably suggested by Hogarth's night-scene—"Life Class at the St Martin's Lane School," * which, however, far exceeds it, and is indeed nothing short of a masterpiece of lighting and arrangement.

At this moment, too, Sir Joshua's own dinner-parties, or scrambles, at Leicester Fields, were in full force, and they deserve especial attention, as showing a quite distinct phase of the President's character. He is here neither Reynolds the courtly painter of all kinds of celebrities, aristocratic, literary and artistic,—nor Reynolds the presiding genius of an important body of brother artists; nor Reynolds the fashionable, consorting willingly with what is best and most distinguished in the numerous circles, to all of which he is made equally welcome. He is simply Reynolds the man, enjoying his *otium* with a certain disregard of conventional dignity, and a certain amount of outward passivity, which does not prevent him from extending to his numerous and distinguished guests a hearty welcome, while leaving to them afterwards the pleasurable excitement of shifting for themselves.

Forster, in his *Life of Goldsmith*, slyly suggests that, in this assemblage of brilliant wits and men of mark, there may, at times, have been some need of the good humour and gaiety with which the poet now so often enlivened these famous meetings.

"Well, Sir Joshua," said lawyer Dunning (afterwards Lord Ashburton), on arriving at one of the dinners, "and whom have you got to dine with you to-day? The last time I dined in your house, the company was of such a sort that, by G—, I believe all the rest of the world enjoyed peace for that afternoon."

It is possible, when we recall these noisy, brilliant

* In the Diploma Gallery of the Royal Academy.

symposia, to sympathise just a little bit with that foolish nobleman—an intimate friend of Sir Joshua's—who, according to an anecdote related by the master himself to Northcote, deemed those persons who had gained fame as literary characters so formidable, that he, Sir Joshua, could "no more have prevailed upon him to dine at the same table with Johnson and Goldsmith, than with two tygers" (*sic*) (Northcote's *Life of Reynolds*, Vol. I. p. 329).

"They were," Forster goes on to observe of the Leicester Fields' entertainments, "the first great example that had been given in this country of a cordial intercourse between persons of distinguished pretensions of all kinds—poets, physicians, lawyers, deans, historians, actors, temporal and spiritual peers, House of Commons men, men of science, men of letters, painters, philosophers, musicians, and lovers of the arts, meeting on a ground of hearty ease, good-humour and pleasantry."

John Courtenay—the Courtenay who praised Boswell's *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides* in the verses beginning,—

> "With Reynolds's pencil, vivid, bold, and true,
> So fervent Boswell gives him to our view,"—

furnishes a graphic description—from parties at which he had been present some years later than this particular period—of the banquets at the President's. Very often the dinner-table, prepared for seven or eight, had to accommodate itself to fifteen or sixteen; for the amiable host would, over and over again, on the eve of dinner, tempt visitors with the intimation that Johnson, or Garrick, or Goldsmith, or some star of the first magnitude was to dine there. Not only were the guests closely packed, but, when the dinner began, a want of knives and forks, of plates and glasses, made itself felt.

"The two or three occasional domestics were undisciplined; the kitchen had to keep pace with the visitors; and it was easy to know the guests best acquainted with the house by their never failing to call instantly for beer, bread, or wine, that they might get them before the first course was over, and the worst confusion begun. Once Sir Joshua was prevailed upon to furnish his table more amply with dinner glasses and decanters, and some saving of time they proved; yet, as these accelerating utensils were demolished in the course of time, he could never be prevailed upon to replace them. But such trifling embarrassments," continues Mr Courtenay, "only served to enhance the hilarity and singular pleasure of the entertainment."

Malone, who, like Courtenay, could have known these intellectual banquets only at a later period than that at which we have now arrived, gives, in a more courtly and conventional style, such as befits the professional man of letters of the period, an account which does not, if we read between the lines, materially contradict Courtenay's unvarnished tale:—

"The marked character of his table, I think, was, that though there was always an abundant supply of those elegancies which the season afforded, the variety of the courses, the excellence of the dishes, or the flavour of the burgundy, made the least part of the conversation; though the appetite was gratified by the usual delicacies, and the glass, imperceptibly and without solicitation, was cheerfully circulated, everything of this kind appeared secondary and subordinate; and there seemed to be a general, though tacit, agreement among the guests, that *mind* should predominate over *body;* that the honours of the

turtle and the haunch should give place to the feast of wit, and that for a redundant flow of wine the flow of soul should be substituted. Of a table thus constituted, with such a host, and such guests, who would not wish to participate?"

It is amusing to learn that, on the one hand, Sir Joshua's dinners were served always precisely at five o'clock, and that "his was not the fashionable ill-breeding which could wait an hour for two or three persons of title, and put the rest of the company out of humour by invidious distinction;" while, on the other, we find it noted that the master, when himself a guest, very frequently arrived late for dinner.

Detractors of the master have a difficult time of it, so truly is he, to those who would criticise his well-rounded life, open on all sides to the light of day, the "invulnerable" man of Johnson—"the man, with whom if you should quarrel, you will find the most difficulty how to abuse." Some of them have actually laid hold of the harmless little eccentricity just related, concerning the broken dinner-glasses and decanters, to reproach the President with parsimony, and with greed in the accumulation of money. He was, no doubt, a good man of business where his pictures were concerned, and, like Titian and Rubens before him, knew the full market value of his work; but, like those illustrious predecessors, he spent his artistic gains nobly, as these very festivities, for all their informal character, pretty conclusively prove. Farington estimates the expenses in connection with his house at £2000 a year—a very considerable sum according to the value of money at that time. Moreover, the artist who purchased at their own prices the pictures of Gainsborough, Zoffany, and others, and was, in his own undemonstrative

fashion, helpful to Johnson and to Goldsmith whenever they needed help, may be considered to have given sufficient and convincing proofs of his generosity.

The modish side of the master's individuality, his undoubted though not undignified love of smart society, is shown by the number of clubs, literary, social and even sporting, to which he belongs, and the brilliant masquerades and night festivities at the Opera House, at Madame Cornely's in Soho Square, at Vauxhall, at the Pantheon, and elsewhere, which he does not scruple to attend. In addition to the old clubs, with which he chiefly identifies himself—The (Literary) Club and the Dilettanti — we find the Devonshire, the Eumelian (founded by and named after Dr Ash), and the Thursday Night Club at the Star and Garter. And, not content with these, Sir Joshua is extremely anxious to be a member of Almack's.

A masked ball, given by the Thursday-Night Club, on the 10th of February 1771, costs no less than 1000 guineas, and at another Sir Joshua's two lovely sitters, the inseparable friends Mrs Crewe and Mrs Bouverie, appear "dressed as young fellows, the fierce, smart cock of their hats much admired"—a practice which even the most audacious of modern *élégantes*, would now, it is imagined, hesitate to adopt.

At this time Sir Joshua painted the inimitable "Mrs Abington as Miss Prue," which has already been described, and the lovely actress and *demi-mondaine*, Mrs Baddeley, who is shown caressing one of her pet cats. The sitters also include Lady Waldegrave, now legitimately, but not yet avowedly, Duchess of Gloucester; and Mrs Horton, sister of Wilkes's opponent, Colonel Luttrell, who was also to take rank shortly among the royal duchesses.

To this period belongs, too, a rather exceptional

work, which has, on two occasions — in 1879 and again in 1891 — been lent by its present owner, Sir Edward H. Bunbury, to the Winter Exhibitions of the Royal Academy. This is the portrait of "Polly Kennedy," a lady whose beauty and charm secured for her a place of her own among the most fashionable Phrynes of her time. She is seen here in a rich and fanciful costume, Oriental, according to the notions of the time. The dress is white and gold, with an outer robe of sumptuous orange brocade, lined with ermine, and a blue sash. An anxious expression gives a peculiar character to the fair face, the apparently high breeding of which it is difficult to associate with a venal beauty of such wide and liberal views as the too popular Miss Kennedy must, according to all accounts, have professed. No doubt Sir Joshua has idealised and generalised, as he was only too prone to do with women, though, luckily for posterity, not with men; at any rate he has produced a singularly beautiful, distinguished, and, above all, pathetic picture.

The story told of the sitter's strenuous and successful efforts to save from execution two ruffianly brothers, who had been condemned to death for participating in a drunken riot, resulting in the death of one Bigby a watchman, has a genuinely tragic intensity—so pathetic is the persistence of the courtesan against tremendous odds, so hardly won her victory against mighty opponents, including Junius himself, who protests against any grace to a wilful murderer, "because that murderer is the brother of a common prostitute." The situation has curious points of resemblance with that in Victor Hugo's *Marion Delorme*, where the frail Marion seeks to obtain — at whatever price—the pardon, not of a brother, but of her lover, Didier.

The letter written by Sir Joshua to the lady's chief

admirer, Sir Charles Bunbury, is worth transcribing, as showing the enthusiastic interest taken by the master in this portrait, and the conviction—no doubt genuine, although it had been expressed before, and was many times to be expressed again—that the work was to turn out his best:—

"*September*, 1770.

"DEAR SIR,—I have finished the face very much to my own satisfaction. It has more grace and dignity than anything I have ever done, and it is the best coloured. As to the dress, I should be glad it might be left undetermined till I return from my fortnight's tour. When I return, I will try different dresses. The Eastern dresses are very rich, and have one sort of dignity; but 'tis a mock dignity in comparison of the simplicity of the antique. The impatience I have to finish it will shorten my stay in the country. I shall set out in an hour's time.—I am, with the greatest respect, your most obliged servant, J. REYNOLDS."

In July of this year (1770), there is to be recorded the premature death, at the age of forty-five, of Francis Cotes, a painter whom Hogarth's antagonism, rather than his true judgment, had preferred, we have seen, to Reynolds himself; who, nevertheless, deserves a much higher place in English art than has yet been accorded to him. As a pastelliste, though he may possibly have owed much to the example of the Venetian artist La Rosalba, whose cool, silvery colour his own resembles, he certainly succeeded better than any Englishman of his time; and his portraits in oils, especially of ladies, have a peculiar, discreet harmony of their own, a reposeful distinction, which entitle them to a place beside, if not exactly in the same

rank with, the work of greater and more widely-known contemporaries. Thus, for instance, his companion oval portraits of the two fair Gunnings, though they preserve a *soupçon* of pre-Reynoldsian stiffness, realise the historical loveliness of these ladies better than Sir Joshua himself has succeeded in doing. His best performances are not to be seen in public places. A portrait of Mary, Duchess of Norfolk, by him, is at Arundel; the full-length of Lord Hawke, at Greenwich; the Diploma Gallery of the Royal Academy contains the portrait of his father; in the possession of Mr Henry Littleton is the group of Mr J. Bates and his wife. The Duke of Northumberland owns the favourite pastel portrait of Queen Charlotte with the Princess Royal asleep on her lap. No work of this painter is more charming, in its unaffected distinction, than the anonymous portrait of a lady — unkindly and erroneously called Kitty Fisher — which was last seen in public at the Guelph Exhibition in 1891.

It was on the 23d of April 1771 that took place, under the presidence of Sir Joshua, the first annual dinner of the Royal Academy, to which, besides the members, twenty-five guests, selected from the great officers of the Court, the ministers, and the most distinguished men of the day, were bidden.

Sir Joshua's contributions to the exhibition were:— "Venus chiding Cupid for learning to cast Accounts;" "A Nymph and Bacchus;" "A Portrait of Theophila Palmer reading *Clarissa;*" "An 'Old Man,' being a preliminary Study for the 'Ugolino';" "A Portrait of a Gentleman;" "Mrs Abington as Miss Prue."

The "Nymph and Bacchus," chiefly remarkable for the lustiness of the infant wine-god, is not to be confounded with the "Mrs Hartley and her Child" exhibited

in 1773. It is the picture engraved as "The Birth of Bacchus," and belongs to the Hon. W. F. B. Massey Mainwaring, who lent it to the Old Masters in 1884. The "Old Man" is the model White, the Ugolino of Reynolds's picture, and the St Paviarius (the paviour) of ill-natured Nathaniel Hone. This study was engraved as "Resignation," and dedicated to Goldsmith, with some lines from the *Deserted Village*, as a return compliment for the poet's own exquisite dedication. The Rembrandtesque "Man's Head in Profile," No. 106 in the National Gallery, is also a study from the same model.

Barry, having completed his artistic education in Rome at the expense of the Burkes, had returned, sternly bent on what he deemed high art, and on nothing else; and, as embodying his uncompromising view of the subject, sent to the Exhibition this year an "Adam and Eve," now in the Sheepshanks Collection at South Kensington, where its frigid, impersonal classicality (or what is so called), overwhelms the beholder with an unspeakable *ennui*. It is not indeed the sentimental, eighteenth-century classicality of Miss Angelica and Cipriani, but it is something derived in equal parts from Bolognese art and Græco-Roman sculpture.

Gainsborough contributes no less than five full-length portraits, and Cosway a portentous allegory. Nathaniel Dance is represented by that altogether grotesque portrait of Garrick as Richard III., in which the despairing monarch appears flourishing a stage sword after the fashion of a walking cane. The result to be derived from a contemplation of this performance is a belief that Hogarth's only less unfortunate version of the same subject must necessarily be a fine and impressive picture. Hayman (of whom, by the way, there is, from the brush of Reynolds, so excellent a portrait

sketch in the Diploma Gallery of the Royal Academy) sends "Christ and the Two Disciples at Emmaüs;" Angelica Kauffmann, fancy pictures of the usual pseudo-classic type, and portraits.

West, besides classical and biblical subjects, contributes his famous "Death of Wolfe," as to the genesis of which he himself gives so amusing an account. Personages no less than the Archbishop of York, and Sir Joshua himself, endeavoured, it would appear, to dissuade West from so dangerous and revolutionary an innovation as the painting of a contemporary event in the garb and with the accompaniments of the time. West stood firm against the ministers of the Church and the Academy combined, and painted his picture as he had planned it. Sir Joshua's signal fairness and candour are once more shown by the fact that, returning when the picture was finished, he seated himself before it, and, after half-an-hour's examination, said :—

"West has conquered; he has treated the subject as it ought to be treated. I retract my objections. I foresee that this picture will not only become one of the most popular, but will occasion a revolution in art."

It undoubtedly was a revolution, so far as the English art of the moment was concerned, and nothing is more curious than that it should have originated in calm, careful, conventional West, the favourite purveyor of classicalities to good King George. Still, it is necessary to qualify Leslie and Taylor's statement — "Till this picture was painted, no work had been produced, by a painter of high art, which aimed at the literal representation of a contemporary event. History in high art

disdained historical fact." Le Brun, himself—the courtly, the conventional, the Raphaelesque—has furnished a most striking instance, in contradiction of this last statement, in his great series of designs on the scale of life, representing incidents in the public life of Louis XIV., which were reproduced in Gobelins tapestry by the State manufactory. Again, if Van der Meulen's canvases commemorating the campaigns of the *Roi Soleil* were not precisely high art, they were certainly history, though the treatment might be genre-like; and in these accuracy of costume and environment was rigidly observed.

Later on—in 1776—that haughty vindicator of the classic proprieties, Barry, in order to re-assert the position and define the privileges of "high art," painted another "Death of Wolfe," in which the English eighteenth-century hero and his officers were represented entirely naked. This, however, must have seemed as shocking to the awakened sense of realism in matters historical, as did the realistic innovation of contemporary dress to the professors and theorists when first introduced; for Barry's protest in paint was so coldly received that he did not again contribute to an exhibition of the Royal Academy. His mode of conception, and that of his contemporaries in such matters, was worse even than that of the much-mocked David, who certainly, in his great cartoon for the *Serment du Jeu de Paume* (in the Louvre), represented the historic personages who swore the famous oath clothed only in their patriotism; but he did this in the inchoate stage, that he might the better dress and drape them in the definitive work. Neo-Roman and rabid classic as he was, when he treated a contemporary subject, as in the magnificent *Couronnement de l'Impératrice Joséphine* (Louvre), he conformed absolutely to the dresses of the time, down

to their smallest detail, and sought for his classic dignity in the bearing and general aspect of the personages represented.

It is in May 1771 that young Northcote plucks up courage to start from Plymouth for London, and, accomplishing his pleasant pilgrimage on foot, is at the end of it kindly received by Sir Joshua, with offers of assistance and promises to lend any picture in his collection for copying. He receives every facility at the house for such copying and is especially enraptured with the good-nature of Miss Reynolds. To his surprise, however, he finds that the pupils are absolute strangers to Sir Joshua's method of working, and that he makes use of strange colours and vehicles, and works in a room quite apart — never admitting them to the sanctum, save to act on emergency as models.

Northcote having obtained the means of meeting the necessities of daily life by colouring plates of birds for a printseller on Ludgate Hill, goes regularly every day to Sir Joshua's, and proceeds ardently with his copying of old masters in the President's gallery. Soon the latter, evidently struck by his enthusiasm and his power of application, and perceiving, too, that the raw youth may easily be fashioned into a very useful instrument to assist him in the more mechanical part of his profession, proposes to his *protégé* to take up his residence at Leicester Fields for four or five years, and to assist him in the studio on the same footing as the other pupils. How eagerly and gratefully this offer is accepted may be readily imagined, since Northcote is thus brought into immediate and daily contact with the fountain-head of the newer English art, and is, moreover, relieved at the very beginning of his artistic career from the anxieties of a hand-to-mouth existence, such as is the rule rather than

the exception with youthful artists persistently following their vocation in the teeth of material difficulties.

From the 13th of August to the 6th of September, Sir Joshua was again in Paris—whether to see or to buy pictures does not clearly appear. A passage in a letter written by Northcote to his brother—cited by Leslie and Taylor—deserves to be considered, as giving, in a few words, a certain insight into the relations between Sir Joshua and Miss Reynolds, and furnishing proof that he was courteous, even where sympathy was completely lacking, which we must unfortunately assume to have been the case in the present instance:—

"I received your letter, which much entertained me. It was brought to me while I was at dinner with Miss Reynolds, Miss Offy Palmer (a niece of Sir Joshua), and Mr Clark. Miss Reynolds also had a letter by the same post, but it was not from Sir Joshua, who is at this time in Paris, for he never writes to her, and, between ourselves, I believe but seldom converses as we used to do in our family, and never instructs her in painting. I found she knew nothing of his having invited me to be his scholar and live in the house, till I told her of it. She has the command of the household and the servants as much as he has. . . ."

It is instructive to find Northcote saying:—"It was very provoking, after I had been for hours labouring on the drapery of one of his portraits from a lay-figure, to see him, with a few masterly sweeps of his pencil (pencil meant brush in those days), destroy nearly all my work, and turn it into something much finer; and yet, but for my work, it would not have been what he made it."

We seem to see here the master working, much as we

know from Rembrandt's own indications that he must have worked, on the nearly finished canvases of pupils; or proceeding to give life, by swift and sure touches, to the dead preparation of a well-trained helper, as some of Rubens's unfinished performances give evidence that he did.

Sir Joshua delivered his Fourth Discourse at the distribution of prizes on the 10th of December 1771.

Among the notabilities painted by the master at this time was the brilliant navigator Joseph (afterwards Sir Joseph) Banks, who had just then returned from the great three years' voyage round the world with Captain Cook and Dr Solander, and was already then planning a new expedition into the South Seas. This is one of the most masculine and characteristic pieces of portraiture that we owe to the master, and we may concede to it, at least, equal rank with the "Johnson," the "Goldsmith," the "Baretti," the "Gibbon," the "John Hunter" itself. The enthusiastic young naturalist appears seated at a table on which are a globe and some large tomes, on the edge of one of which appears the quotation "*Cras ingens iterabimus æquor*," which has, in this case, a more than common significance, since it is the keynote of the conception. Rarely, if ever, has a virile energy, an ardent and generous impatience to be up and doing, been more nobly expressed than in this canvas. This is, indeed, the true counterfeit of the man whom all the lionising of the worlds of science and fashion, all the jargon of the Blues, could not detain from the new scientific enterprises which he burned to accomplish. We may profitably contrast the "Joseph Banks," as a dramatic portrait, with the "Commodore Keppel" of 1753. In the earlier picture—the one, it will be remembered, which constituted the turning point of Reynolds's career as a painter—the drama suggested is mainly the outward one

Sir Joseph Banks.

of incident, which, unless strongly corrected by the suggestion of a strong and permanent individuality, is apt to lend an ephemeral character to portraiture. In the nobler and more mature work, the drama suggested is that of the soul—the expression of an overmastering passion, rather than a typical incident—and this dramatic element, if infinitely harder to grasp and to express, is far more legitimately within the province of portraiture than the other, since it presupposes a passionate concentration and intensification of the whole individuality, and not its partial overshadowing in the accident of momentary action.

Sir Joseph Banks was again portrayed by our master in one of the two great Dilettanti pictures presently to be mentioned. He achieved in 1778 that enviable dignity, the Presidency of the Royal Society, which he retained for forty-two years, and was in 1787 made a baronet.

Garrick and his wife were sitters this year for the portrait-group painted for the Hon. F. Fitzmaurice, in which the ever mercurial, bright-eyed King of the Players appears seated with his still handsome wife on a garden seat in the grounds of their villa at Hampton, he just closing a book from which he has been reading to her. This is stated to be one of the most natural and vigorous of the Garrick series; it has not been seen by the writer, who has, moreover, been unable to ascertain its history since 1826, when it appears to have been sold at Christie's. Tom Taylor, in a foot-note, states that it belonged in his time to Mr Grizell.

Among the sitters early in 1772 appears the Duchess of Buccleugh, who had already, in 1759, been painted by Sir Joshua, when she was still Lady Betty Montagu. She is now depicted in full-length, seated on a bench under a tree, with her left arm encircling her child,

Lady Mary Scott; the canvas being enlivened by two dogs, one of them affectionately jumping up at her knees. This is the lady called "the Good Duchess," because, we are told, she expended in judicious charity £30,000 a year.

The brilliant lawyer and, as he was deemed, peculiarly ugly man, Dunning—one of the defenders some years after of Admiral Keppel—is also found to be sitting this year. He has been depicted at least twice by our master; first in a full-bottomed wig and a black gown with long white bands. This portrait has been since 1860 in the National Portrait Gallery; it was engraved in 1787 by Bartolozzi. The second portrait is that in the great group comprising, besides Dunning (Lord Ashburton), Colonel Barré in a plain dress, and Lord Shelburne (Marquess of Lansdowne) in peer's robes. In neither of these portraits do the strong, well-cut features and resolute aspect of the sitter quite justify the great lawyer's reputation as an unusually ill-favoured man.

To this time also belongs the picture already referred to of the fashionable beauty, Mrs Crewe, as Ste. Geneviève, minding (or rather not minding) her sheep—a masquerading this, which, however lovely the picture, must appear even more distasteful than the tawdry assumption of the paste-board goddess with which Reynolds so often gratified the wishes of his fairest sitters. In April we find at the studio the uncouth Duke of Cumberland, and his lovely, intriguing duchess, Ann Luttrell, formerly Horton, whose inveigling into the bonds of legitimate union of the ungainly, almost half-witted duke was the main cause which led to the passing of the Royal Marriage Act still in force.

The Incorporated Society now opens its new gallery on the site of the Lyceum Theatre and makes one more

determined effort to place itself on equal terms with its young yet already overpowering adversary. Its chief contributors are Romney, with the portraits of Ozias Humphreys the miniature painter, and Meyer the enameller, Stubbs, Wright of Derby, and Sir Joshua's former pupils, Barron and Berridge.

Even apart from the important contribution of its President, the Royal Academy makes a brave show. Gainsborough, still resident at Bath, sends four portraits and no less than ten landscape drawings; Barry, persevering in the vindiction of high art according to his view, sends "Medea at her Incantation," "Venus rising from the Sea," and "The Education of Achilles." West gives as a pendant to the "Death of Wolfe," "Penn's Treaty with the Indians," a piece of highly tempered, yet, for the time, audacious realism of the same type, which has been much popularised by engraving.

Sir Joshua's share in the show was as follows:—

"Miss Meyer as Hebe,"—the portrait of the fair daughter of Meyer, R.A., the enameller, of which Horace Walpole, with much probability, observes that "the idea is taken from a print by Goltzius, but far more graceful." This canvas was lent to the Old Masters in 1873 by Baron Lionel de Rothschild.

The seated full-length of "Mrs Crewe as Ste. Geneviève" to which reference has just been made.

A half-length of Dr Robertson, the Scotch historian.

The portrait of Hickey, the attorney.

"Mrs Quarrington as St Agnes,"—with the obligatory attributes of the saint.

Another of Sir Joshua's favourite fancy pictures of models—the old Ugolino (White), as a Captain of Banditti.

Was it some ephemeral fashion this year which made

the beauties prefer the *rôle* of the saint to that of the goddess; or was any influence at work on the master himself at the moment, inclining his thoughts in a new direction?

The great sensation of the year appears to have been Zoffany's picture, "Academicians gathered about the Model in the Life School of Somerset House"—now in the Royal Collection. All the prominent members are here, save Gainsborough, whose absence from the canvas well typifies the indifference with which he treated the proceedings of the Academy. It was a pretty thought of the German artist to hang on the walls the portraits of the two female Academicians, Angelica Kauffmann and Mary Moser the flower-painter, since these ladies could not well, under the circumstances, be included in the living group. Sir Joshua is here with the unfailing ear-trumpet, and so are, among others, West, Nathaniel Hone, Cosway, Chambers, Zoffany himself, Wilson, Cipriani, Zuccarelli, and that curious excrescence in the Academy—of which he was an honorary member—Tan-Chet-Qua, the Chinese modeller.

Attention has been called to the curious fact that several members of the Royal Academy of Painting in Paris, invited, perhaps, by the President on the occasion of his last trip, exhibited on this occasion. Among these are the rather obscure names of Olivier and Pasquier, and with them that of the Alsatian landscapist, De Loutherbourg, a painter who had already achieved great success on the other side as a landscape, marine, and battle painter. He is an almost unique example of the successful transplantation of a full-grown and mature artist from one soil to another. De Loutherbourg, as is well known, became completely acclimatised here, and himself was elected a

member of the English Academy in 1781. His art, too, acquired quite a national quality, and, what is more, shone in purely national subjects, such as "The Spanish Armada" and "Lord Howe's Victory, 1794." In this he stands apart from such exotic artists as Angelica Kauffmann, Cipriani, Zuccarelli, and Bartolozzi, who, although strongly influenced by the English atmosphere and the English mode of thought, can never be said to belong to the English school. Zoffany, on the other hand, notwithstanding his Bohemian blood, his German origin, and his artistic education in Rome, became as thoroughly national in tone as any Englishman of them all, and, indeed, grasped with greater strength and subtlety certain elements of the British character than any artist had done since Hogarth—by whom Zoffany, almost alone in his generation, was evidently much influenced.

This year, Sir Joshua painted the stately tragic actress, Mrs Yates, the unapproachable Medea, Lady Macbeth, Constance, and Marguerite of Anjou of her day; the precursor of Mrs Siddons, who at first hardly ventured to risk herself in the parts upon which Mrs Yates had most definitely set her mark. The portrait shows her seated, in an elegant toilette of her own day, looking up from the perusal of a book—doubtless a theatrical part—which she has been studying; above her is a bust of Shakespeare.

Sir Joshua's connection with the Thrales had become a close one at this point, and he was already then at work on some of the portraits for the brewer's famous gallery of notabilities at Streatham, of which more hereafter. He never was, however, an intimate friend of Thrale or his brilliant wife in the sense that Johnson was an intimate friend, and in their relations there must have always remained an element of ceremonious courtesy, which the

censorious dictionary-maker—seriously and even affectionately interested both in husband and wife—often thought himself justified in omitting.

Thrale's position was in one sense an unique one, and is not clearly indicated by the mere statement that he was a brewer of great means and corresponding liberality. His education had been that of the aristocracy and high society of his time, and his early relations with this class were easily and naturally sustained through life, though he had the courage to stick to his brewing, in which, indeed, his ambition and effort to o'ertop his brother brewers often asserted itself at the expense of his pocket. Mrs Thrale had birth, good looks, and an admirable natural wit in her favour, and, aided by the opulence and good position of her husband, she was thus able to make the comfortable, well-supplied Streatham villa the centre of a brilliant and, what is more, on the whole a friendly circle. Though it had many ups and downs, with which all who know Mrs Piozzi's autobiography and the memoirs of the time are familiar, its charms were such as could not be paralleled by those of any of the *salons* of the more fashionable Blue Stockings. The intimacy, the easy intercourse which were the rule at the Streatham gatherings, the opportunities for discussion afforded, constituted a much nearer approach to the true French *salon* of the eighteenth century than did any of the brilliant, formal routs of Mrs Montagu, the chaoses and Babels of her nearest rival, Mrs Vesey, or the imitations of any of the inferior aspirants.

Mrs Thrale's education, *entourage*, and genuinely bright and distinctive individuality entitled her to a high place among the sister Blues with whom she consorted. Luckily, too, her overpowering sense of humour preserved her from many of their absurdities, while, on the other hand, her

social position, good, or rather substantial, as it was, did not quite enable her to queen it on equal terms with the most prominent of the pompous and well-intentioned ladies in whose circle she moved. The Blue-Stocking set did not, as a whole, reach its apogee until some few years later than the period with which we are for the moment dealing; and it will therefore be convenient to take another opportunity of dealing with these home-grown *Précieuses Ridicules*, or, rather *Femmes Savantes*, who approach so much more nearly to the imitations of the Hôtel de Rambouillet satirised by Molière than to those Parisian divinities of the eighteenth century, whom it is probable that they themselves had more particularly in view.

With regard to Mrs Thrale herself, if we owed her nothing else, we should be duly grateful to her for what is, notwithstanding a certain sub-acid tone and an evident lack of complete sympathy, one of the best portraits that has been left us of Sir Joshua—the one, indeed, which most nearly combines into a congruous whole the seemingly conflicting accounts supplied from other sources:—

Here is the familar portrait in words, drawn by the vivacious lady as a commentary to the portrait of the master, painted by himself as one of the Streatham series:—

"Of Reynolds all good should be said and no harm,
Tho' the heart is too frigid, the pencil too warm;
Yet each fault from his converse we still must disclaim,
As his temper 'tis peaceful, and pure as his fame.
Nothing in it o'erflows, nothing ever is wanting,
It nor chills like his kindness nor glows like his painting,
When Johnson by strength overpowers our mind,
When Montagu dazzles, and Burke strikes us blind;

To Reynolds well pleased for relief we must run,
Rejoice in his shadow, and shrink from the sun."

In September 1772, Sir Joshua was elected an alderman of his native town, Plympton, and gratefully accepted the honour thus conferred upon him in a letter containing the promise to appear there next year, in order to return thanks in person. Both Northcote, and Leslie and Taylor, have expressed themselves a little puzzled that he, at the height of his fame, should have thought it worth while to accept the provincial dignity thus offered; the latter suggesting, however, with obvious probability, as the moving cause, his strong love for his native place, and pleasure at being honoured in his own country. The acceptance of the office by the President of the Academy is really, as it appears to the writer, a very natural and normal incident in his career, showing, as it doubtless does, besides the manly pride in being honoured by his fellow-citizens, that peculiar universality, that love of observing, and playing a part in, all phases of society and of life, which distinguished Reynolds the man even more strongly than it did Reynolds the artist. To this quality he doubtless owed in a great measure the grasp, shown in male portraiture, of individualities so divergent from each other, so entirely removed from his own, upon which comment has already so frequently been made.

The Fifth Discourse was delivered at the usual ceremony of the distribution of prizes, on the 10th of December 1772.

It was on the 15th of March 1773 that occurred one of the capital events in the life of Sir Joshua's friend, Goldsmith; this was none other than the production, after many vicissitudes, of *She Stoops to Conquer* at Covent Garden. It had been accepted with

great hesitation and misgiving by Manager Colman, after much pressure on the part of Johnson; and some of the actors cast for the chief parts, including Mrs Abington herself, had so completely shared in the misgivings of the manager as, upon one pretext or another, to throw up their parts. Johnson led a body of friends, including Sir Joshua, Steevens, Edmund, and Richard Burke, and others of less note, to the first night, well-prepared to be enthusiastic by a lively dinner at the Shakespeare Tavern near the theatre, at which poor Goldsmith was very naturally the one anxious and perturbed person. We know that the comedy had an unqualified success, not *d'estime* only, but of laughter, bubbling and spontaneous, and that Colman and those autocrats, the actors, found themselves completely disconcerted by the result. The manager must, notwithstanding, have received agreeable balm for this signal proof of his want of judgment in the fact that the play had what was, for those days, an exceptional run, and produced between £400 and £500 profit. Northcote says in the *Life*:—

"I recollect that Dr Goldsmith gave me an order soon after this, with which I went to see the comedy; and the next time I saw him he inquired of me what my opinion was of it. I told him that I would not presume to be a judge of its merits. He asked: 'Did it make you laugh?' I answered: 'Exceedingly.' 'Then,' said the Doctor, 'that is all that I require.'"

Northcote's anecdote of his first introduction to Dr Goldsmith, a few months before this event, is not a little curious, as throwing a side light on the Reynolds's interior, and displaying the patronising *bonhomie* with which he treated his best pupil.

"The other day," he writes to his brother, "Goldsmith dined here. It was the first time I ever saw him. I had before told both Sir Joshua and Miss Reynolds that I had a great curiosity to see him; and when I came into the room the first word Sir Joshua said to me was: 'This is Dr Goldsmith, Mr Northcote, whom you so much wished to see. Why did you desire to see him?' The suddenness of the question rather confused me, and I replied: 'Because he is a notable man.' This, in one sense of the word, was so unlike his character, that Sir Joshua laughed heartily, and said he should in future always be called 'the notable man;' but what I meant was a man of note and eminence. He seems an unaffected and most good-natured man, but knows very little about pictures, as he often confesses with a laugh."

This banter, thoroughly good-natured as it is, both of pupil and friend, does not altogether accord with Forster's enthusiastic praise of Sir Joshua as the one who, alone among the illustrious members of The Club, abstained from quizzing the unfortunate Goldy, so much the butt even of those who loved him—of Burke, of Boswell and Hawkins, of Johnson himself. And yet that the poet sincerely loved his friends at The Club is nowhere more happily shown than in the letters which he writes to Sir Joshua in 1770, when he is travelling in France and Flanders with the Hornecks. Here he lets his home-sickness and his longing to be again with them, and especially with Reynolds, undisguisedly appear. The truth is that Goldsmith was of those who would have all the world busied with them, who are perpetually in quest of the sympathy of, and, failing that, of the contact with, their fellow-creatures. The banter, the quizzing is no great suffering, and, indeed, as an evidence of friendliness,

expressed somewhat *à l'envers*, they come to look for it. It is the cold air of neglect and indifference, the austerity of solitude, from which they shrink.

At the Royal Academy Exhibition of this year, which opened on the 24th of April, the works of Gainsborough, usually so prolific a contributor, were looked for in vain. This was the first of his many quarrels with the Academy, but whether the disagreement was in this case occasioned by some dispute as to the hanging of his pictures, or otherwise, does not clearly appear. Another absentee from the walls was that miserable, neglected, great artist, Wilson, whose unattractive personality appears to have fatally stood in the way of the recognition of his noble art by a public which was taught to reverence Claude, but could not, unguided, see anything in the work of the painter who, without slavish imitation, approached, perhaps, most nearly to the great French master. The occasion was also signalised by the first appearance of Reynolds's pupil, Northcote, with a portrait, and by that of young Morland, then twenty years of age, and not long since a student in the Academy Schools.

A piquant surprise, too, is the return, after an interval of nearly twenty years, of the *Peintre turc*, Liotard, who, for one brief moment, had divided the attention of the town with Reynolds in his early time, and had, as has been seen, received at the hands of the young painter some unnecessarily bitter criticism. Now the veteran pastelliste reappears, no doubt under the auspices of Sir Joshua, who has shown himself so singularly and, as some have held, unduly tolerant of foreign art, and profits by the custom which admits the members of foreign academies. The indefatigable portraitist had, in the meanwhile, successfully continued his career, passing the greater portion of the interval in Holland, where he had

meanwhile married the daughter of a French merchant established at Amsterdam.* He continued to the end to earn money and popularity, but never entitled himself to take rank with a Quentin de La Tour, or even with a Rosalba or a Perronneau.

Barry, who in the February of this year had been elected an Academician, was high-classical as usual; and not less so West, the very titles of whose pictures, and especially that "Portrait of a Gentleman in the Character of a Roman Tribune," cause the modern reader of this year's catalogue to shiver with apprehension.

The austere classicalities of Jacques-Louis David, the freezing representations of scenes in Roman history and Lemprière which the Revolution and the period immediately preceding it called forth, were not as motiveless, with all their sins, as these English productions. They might be, they were, based on a system absolutely false and void of all elements of true classicality; but from triviality the entire conviction, the intense personal bias of the painter preserved them. And then, David had the one saving grace that he never travestied his portraits; he displayed, indeed, in these a sturdy, a noble realism, worthy of the Florence of the fifteenth century, and it is for this reason that his "Pius VII.," and such *bons bourgeois* as the "Mons^r Pécoul" and "Madame Pécoul," may take rank among the masterpieces of portraiture of the late eighteenth century.

Sir Joshua's contributions to the year's display consisted of no less than twelve pictures:—

The full-length of the Duchess of Buccleugh with her child, already referred to.

"Lady Melbourne and Child"—engraved as "Maternal

The Ryks Museum of that city contains a collection of his later and weaker performances, bequeathed by a descendant.

Affection," and marked by a certain family likeness to the "Mrs Bouverie and her Child."

A half-length of the Hon. Mrs Seymour Damer, the well-known amateur sculptor, best known by her statue of herself in the hall of the British Museum, and the heads on the bridge at Henley.

(The lady was a pupil of Ceracchi and the elder Bacon, and herself frequently exhibited later on at the Academy. It was she who, by the bequest of Horace Walpole, her cousin, succeeded to Strawberry Hill, with £2000 a year for its maintenance.)

"A young lady, whole-length."

"Mr and Mrs Garrick"—the picture painted for the Hon. F. Fitzmaurice, and already referred to.

The great portrait of Joseph Banks which has above been described at length.

"A Gentleman—three-quarters."

"A Nymph with the Infant Bacchus," being a portrait of the beautiful actress, Mrs Hartley, with her child. Irresistible here is the truthfulness of expression of Master Hartley-Bacchus, perched on the fair, round shoulder of his mother, and undecided whether to whimper or to smile.

"A Strawberry Girl"—the famous original of many replicas and copies, now, with the rest of the Hertford-Wallace pictures, in the collection of Lady Wallace at Manchester House.

We are told that Sir Joshua considered it one of the "half-dozen original things" which, he declared, no man ever exceeded in his life's work. It is indeed a genuine invention, this timid little mouse-like creature, creeping along with her pottle on her arm, and one which only he who loved children, and had the sympathy of the heart with all their pretty, half animal-like ways, could

light upon. The execution, too, in its lightness, its half-finish accentuating no detail, is admirably suited to the subject.

The border-line is here fixed between genuine *naïveté*, such as is in this piece still to be found, and that excessive self-consciousness and forced *espièglerie* which mars such later things at the "Muscipula," the "Robinetta," and the dainty "Collina." It is in these last that Sir Joshua, emulating too much the exquisite, mannered graces of Correggio, overstepped the limits of the healthy and the genuine in art, and fell into a distasteful artifice, foreign to what is best in his own artistic nature.

The master's most important canvas—the one which had cost him so much anxious care and prepartion for two or three years past—was the "Count Ugolino with his Children in the Dungeon," which was described in the catalogue by the famous lines in the 33d canto of the *Inferno*:—

> "Io non piangeva, si dentro impietrai:
> Piangevan elli, ed Anselmuccio mio
> Disse, 'Tu guardi si, Padre! che hai?'
> Pero non lagrimai nè rispos' io
> Tutto quel giorno, nè la notte appresso."

This even the captious Walpole marks in his marginal notes as "most admirable," while Leslie goes so far as to say: "I can conceive no finer treatment of the subject. Indeed, it seems to me the only treatment." It is possible, perhaps, to agree with Tom Taylor's much-qualified praise of it as (with all the drawbacks which he points out) "by far the painter's finest historical picture"—since this would only be to place it above such works as "The Death of Dido," "The Witches' Scene in Macbeth," the "Infant Hercules strangling the Serpents;" but it is quite impos-

sible to-day for even the master's most unqualified admirers to accept Leslie's enthusiastic estimate of the work. A Rembrandtesque skill in the impressive lighting of the whole, an undeniable breadth in the treatment of the chiaroscuro and in the massing of the groups, may be readily conceded; but there is a terrible artificiality about the conception, which is the outcome, not of the true vision of the painter-poet flashing light upon so tremendous a subject, but of an artificial building up of materials, mechanically elaborated with such technical accomplishment as the master possessed—and that, as he himself was the first to admit, was not sufficient for such a self-imposed task as this. From a merely academic point of view the grouping of the starving children is harmonious and impressive, but it is based on arbitrary notions of the grand style, and not, in the first place, on nature. The main failure of the picture is the Ugolino himself. This is not the woe, beyond speech and beyond movement, of the father whose tears are dried up at their source, whose heart is stone within him; through it all we still see old White, the model, sitting up, with a more or less appropriate expression, *de circonstance*. All the unaffected reverence of Michelangelo and Raphael, all the severe "high-art" principles, which led our master to think, while he theorised, that he preferred the Bolognese school to the Venetian, cannot get beyond this; and the unsurpassed portraitist only succeeds, in his most successful historical work, in clearly defining the limits of his talent in a path which it was not given to him to tread.

It would be unreasonable to ask that the gracious individuality of the great artist should bear a fruit which the stock is not made to produce, or that he should shine with an equal radiance here, where no artist of British blood or origin showed himself capable of shining—

neither West, the frigid and unemotional, nor Barry, the ardent and convinced, nor Northcote, the painstaking, nor any, save perhaps the Cornishman Opie, whose vigour and virile grasp of dramatic subject might, at a more propitious moment, have resulted in great work in this branch of art.

The note of dramatic and human passion in historical and romantic art was not genuinely struck until the early days of the succeeding century, when Gros—himself a student of Reynolds's worshipped Buonarroti—produced the famous "*Pestiférés de Jaffa*," when Géricault immortalised himself with the "*Radeau de la Méduse*," when Delacroix flamed out with the "*Dante et Virgile*" and the "*Massacres de Scio*."

Northcote, who, at any rate, on a point like this is entitled to be considered an authority, gives the following account of the origin of the picture, which bears out curiously a criticism built entirely on the work itself:—

"This painting may be said to have been produced, as an historical picture, by accident, for the head of the Count had been painted previous to the year 1773, and finished on what we painters call a 'half-length' canvas, and was, in point of expression, exactly as it now stands, but without any intention on the part of Sir Joshua of making it the subject of an historical composition, or having the story of Count Ugolino in his thoughts. Being exposed in the picture gallery, along with his other works, it was seen either by Mr Edward Burke or Dr Goldsmith—I am not certain which—who immediately explained that it struck him as being the precise person, countenance and expression of the Count Ugolino, as described by Dante in his *Inferno*.

"Sir Joshua immediately had his canvas enlarged, in

order that he might be enabled to add the other figures, and to complete his painting of the impressive description of the Italian poet. This picture, when finished, was bought by the late Duke of Dorset for 400 guineas."

It was lent to the Old Masters in 1873 — just a hundred years after its first appearance—by Lord Buckhurst, and is still, it is believed, at Knole.

Gainsborough's supreme good sense, his perfect consciousness of the direction in which his powers lay, is nowhere better shown than in his complete abstention from a branch of art, which had, during the latter half of the century—in England, at any rate—no real existence.

This year, 1773, was in every respect one of Sir Joshua's busiest and most successful, both from an artistic and a social point of view. In July he visited Oxford to receive from the university the honorary degree of D.C.L.—another of those distinctions which he so dearly loved, and so well graced, and one, too, which stood him in good stead in the subsequent official portraits which he painted of himself for the Painters' Gallery in the Uffizi, for Plympton, and for the Royal Academy itself.

The honours of the occasion were for Sir Joshua, and for Dr Beattie, the author of an *Essay on Truth*, and one of the lions of the moment. The painter's admiration for the Scotch professor and his work found expression in a curious allegorical portrait, memorable because it was the cause of the only disagreement which ever cast a momentary cloud over the affectionate friendship existing between the former and Goldsmith. Dr Beattie is presented with his essay under his arm, while, overshadowing him, the Angel of Truth tramples under foot the demons of unbelief,—Infidelity, Sophistry, and False-

hood — or rather, as Beattie himself appears to have christened them, Prejudice, Scepticism and Folly. Scepticism or Sophistry was avowedly Voltaire, while the other demons were supposed to bear a resemblance to Gibbon and Hume respectively. On this point Sir Joshua himself wrote to Beattie:—

"There is only a figure covering his face with his hands, which they may call Hume or anybody else; it is true it has a tolerably broad back. As for Voltaire, I intended he should be one of the group."

One's sympathies must be entirely with Goldsmith, when we find him saying to his much-loved friend and mentor:—

"How could you degrade so high a genius as Voltaire before so mean a writer as Beattie? The existence of Dr Beattie and his book together will be forgotten in the space of ten years, but your allegorical picture and the fame of Voltaire will live for ever, to your disgrace as a flatterer."

Bold, manly words these of Goldsmith's, if he really uttered them as they are quoted; for they show him assuming for once the character, to which he was so fully entitled, of a man of letters of the highest rank, qualified to speak plainly on such a point as this. One cannot help suspecting here—though there is no direct authority for the statement—that the influence of Johnson, an avowed enemy of Voltaire, with an unsatisfied grudge against him, may have been brought to bear to induce Sir Joshua for once to play the high-moral satirist. And then the picture itself, though fine as a portrait of the prosaic Scotch professor, is in other respects an absurdity, so

grotesque is the incongruity between the realistic and the allegorical elements in the work. The demons are flabby and unconvincing to the last degree, and the victory of Truth over such invertebrate opponents nothing to boast of. This is but one more proof that Sir Joshua's genius did not lie in the direction of imaginative art; that he had the imagination which enabled him intuitively to divine the workings of the human soul, but not that other kind which would bear him on its wings into realms where observation and experience, guided by sympathy, are no longer sufficient, unless they be combined with a genuine power of invention. We are inevitably led to compare the "Dr Beattie" with Ingres's well-known portrait of "Cherubini crowned by a Muse," in which the vain attempt to combine incongruous elements which *will* not coalesce—a white-robed immortal and a realistically habited, nineteenth-century old gentleman of surly aspect —make a work possessing many fine qualities as a whole absolutely ridiculous.

It was in September that Reynolds, already, we have seen, an Alderman, was elected Mayor of Plympton, and thereupon paid a visit of thanks to his native town. His honest pride in the distinction conferred is placed beyond question by that portion of the inscription, on the back of the portrait in the Painters' Gallery at the Uffizi, which runs: "*Necnon oppidi natalis, dicti Plimpton, comitatu Devon: præfectus, justiciarius, morumque censor.*"

The following anecdote, given by Leslie and Taylor (Vol. II. p. 33), gives further proof of the glow of satisfaction which our master experienced at his election. Were it not that irony so little entered into the ingenuous simplicity and openness of his nature, one might fancy that a touch of it coloured his answer to the compliments of the King on the occasion:—

"Just before his visit to Devonshire, after dining one day with some friends at his house at Richmond, he walked with his party in the gardens there, where he unexpectedly met the King with some of the Royal Family. The King called Sir Joshua to him, and said that he was informed of the office he was soon to be invested with—that of Mayor of his native town. Sir Joshua, surprised that the circumstance should be known so quickly to the King, assured His Majesty of its truth, and said it was an honour which gave him more pleasure than any other he had ever received in his life; but, recollecting himself, he immediately added: 'Except that which Your Majesty was graciously pleased to confer upon me'—alluding to his knighthood."

It was on this occasion that Sir Joshua presented to the Corporation his portrait painted by himself, in his doctor's robes, and similar in treatment to that in the Painters' Gallery at Florence. A duplicate of the picture, presented by the master to Northcote, passed from the Vernon Collection into the National Gallery. This, in its present condition, appears a superficial and inferior performance, which cannot well be entirely from the hand of Reynolds.

CHAPTER VI.

Proposals to decorate St Paul's—Opposition of the Bishop of London—"Lady Cockburn and her Children"—Signed Pictures of Sir Joshua—"Three Ladies decorating a Term of Hymen"—The Streatham Gallery of Portraits—The Dean of Derry and Dr Johnson—Society of Arts—Barry and Burke—Battle of Epitaphs between Garrick and Goldsmith—"Retaliation"—Death of Goldsmith—Exhibition of 1774—Sir Joshua's Contributions to it—Gainsborough established in London—Comparison and Contrast between Reynolds and Gainsborough—The Sheridans—"Mrs Sheridan as St Cecilia"—Nathaniel Hone's "Pictorial Conjurer"—Satirises Sir Joshua and Angelica Kauffmann—Horace Walpole as a Critic—Exhibition of 1775—"Miss Bowles"—Sir Joshua's Children—Romney established in London—His Previous Career—Northcote leaves Sir Joshua—Last Portrait of Garrick—Enumeration of the Streatham Sir Joshuas.

AT the general meeting of the Academy, held in the month of August of this year, Sir Joshua proposed that an attempt should be made to decorate St Paul's Cathedral with pictures—executed not in fresco, but in oils. The suggestion being received with acclamation, he was empowered to apply to the Dean and Chapter for their approval of the undertaking, which was readily obtained. Sir Joshua himself was to have painted "The Nativity," West, "Moses with the Tables of the Law;" and the Academy selected with them, to take part in the undertaking, Barry, Dance, Cipriani, and Angelica Kauffmann, four other artists being added by the Society of Arts,

which joined in promoting the scheme. Unfortunately although the King, the Archbishop of York, and the Lord Mayor gave a willing assent, Dr Terrick, Bishop of London, proved obdurate, and opposed a *non possumus* to all the most specious arguments—artistic, ritualistic and other —which were brought to bear upon him. On the whole, seeing who were to have been the painters, and what their proved capabilities in the direction of monumental art, it is by no means clear that posterity has suffered much by being deprived of the paintings from biblical history with which the Academy and its President were generously bent on adorning the walls of the metropolitan cathedral.

It appears that the difficulty in finding worthy recipients this year for the three gold medals which the Royal Academy had in 1769 decided to distribute annually, caused the omission, on this occasion, of the Discourse with which Sir Joshua was wont to grace the prize-giving proceedings.

One of the most important pictures matured during this year is the superb "Lady Cockburn with her Children," which, in 1892, by bequest of the late Marianna Augusta, Lady Hamilton, became the property of the nation, and now stands forth one of the crowning ornaments of the Reynolds and Gainsborough room at the National Gallery. It may be taken as marking the transition from the second to the third, the most splendid and florid phase of the President's style, and its fine preservation renders it especially worthy of study and analysis. The gracious lady appears seated in a kind of portico screened from the winds of heaven by a fluttering red curtain; she is playing with her three lovely, round-limbed boys, who are nearly as naked as the cupids they might so well stand for—one in her lap, a second at her side, a third, the

rogue of the party, looking over her shoulder. In order still further to balance the composition, Sir Joshua's favourite macaw—here an improbable and superficially modelled bird, resembling only in its splendour of colour the prototypes of Rubens and Snyders—has been introduced, perched near the base of a column. This beautiful work was finely engraved in stipple, by Tomkins, under the delightfully absurd title, "Cornelia and her Children;" but for this excursion into the classics Sir Joshua must not be made responsible, since in 1792, when the print was published, he was very near his end.

The picture is in many respects typical of the master, both in conception and execution. Here we have a gracious, if a slightly cold and impersonal, presentment of fair English womanhood, and a group of lovely boys, depicted with that heartfelt sympathy for the graces of childhood which was the gift of none among the portrait-painters of the century as it was of Reynolds, though his life was all through its course to lack the joys of paternity. It is as if the calm kindliness of his nature had more nearly been warmed into a passionate glow of tenderness when he conjured up these visions of frolicsome, mutinous childhood, than at any other point where he comes into contact with human nature; save, perhaps, when he depicts manly endeavour and resolve.

Technically, too, the canvas may be selected as showing Reynolds the eclectic in art, but also the master who vindicates his right to borrow where he chooses, since he can assimilate and completely make his own what he takes. The lighting of the picture, and its splendid tawny colour-harmony, formed by the red of the curtain, the warm flesh-tints, the rich orange-yellow of the outer robe of satin bordered with white fur, the gaudy plumage of the macaw, are Rembrandtesque with a difference—with a

more diffused light and a greater variety in harmony. The red quality of the reflected light in the shadows and half-lights recalls Rubens and the Antwerp school; while the largeness of composition, the decorative conception of the whole, suggest the Venetians of the great period.

The signature of the master is inscribed on the hem of the lady's yellow robe, in large ornate characters resembling golden embroidery, and with it the date 1775. This is curious, seeing that the picture was in the main painted in 1773 and exhibited at the Academy in 1774; and it is thus fair to assume that Sir Joshua took it back after the exhibition, and then added some finishing touches, with the date.

No statement has been more frequently made in connection with the career of our painter than the one that this canvas and "Mrs Siddons as the Tragic Muse" were the only works which bore his signature. It has already been shown that the statement is misleading, and that there exist at least four early works quite authentically signed and dated—a number which, it is probable, might be increased, were a careful examination of paintings executed up to 1760 to be undertaken. It would be nearer the mark to say that the two great performances in question are the only ones signed during that later period in which, to his contemporaries, Sir Joshua's manner became so familiar, that a signature, except for posterity, may well have been deemed unnecessary.

Another work of this year is the large portrait-group, "Three Ladies adorning a Term of Hymen," which has for many years been the centre at the National Gallery round which the English pictures of the eighteenth century have been grouped. Three fair Englishwomen, of that refined type of loveliness which Reynolds so happily expressed,

—and by his example taught other painters of his time to express—are adorning, with a heavy garland of flowers, a terminal figure of the Marriage God. They are the three daughters of Sir William Montgomery—the Marchioness of Townsend, the Hon. Mrs Gardiner (mother of Lord Blessington, by whom the picture was presented to the nation in 1837), and the Hon. Mrs Beresford. Here, again, we have Reynolds's peculiar charm and his deficiencies balancing each other. His art is not equal—and no one was more fully aware of this than himself—to the correct and adequate rendering of these three figures in rhythmical movement; but the heads are among the best modelled that Sir Joshua has produced, and the naïvely revealed consciousness of youth, grace, beauty, in no wise detracts from the peculiar charm that has been aimed at and achieved. The picture has quite recently been cleaned, and very successfully on the whole, so far as the heads and the landscape background go. The looped garland of flowers, which was never, it may be assumed, from Sir Joshua's own brush, though he may have heightened it with some masterly touches and brilliant glazes, has now, unfortunately, emerged too garish and crude from the superimposed varnishes, and wrongs the beautiful faces with which it is brought in contact.

The great canvas was a commission from the Hon. Luke Gardiner (afterwards Earl of Blessington), who had himself given sittings to Sir Joshua when he was in London to arrange the details of his marriage with one of the sisters. We find the master writing to Mr Gardiner: "I have every inducement to exert myself on this occasion, both from the confidence you have placed in me, and from the subjects you have presented to me, which are such as I am never likely to meet with again as long as I live; and I flatter myself that, however inferior the picture may

be to what I wish it, or what it ought, it will be the best picture I ever painted." This is one of the well-rounded sonorous compliments in which the urbane master loved to indulge, and yet it is quite possible to believe him sincere, each time he hopes and believes that his last performance will be his best.

It is not a little curious that the "Lady Cockburn and her Children" and this ornate portrait of the English Graces having appeared, as we shall see, in company with each other on the walls of the modest Pall Mall Gallery in 1774, should have been reunited—and this time permanently—at the National Gallery, where their loveliness, dimmed by time, but not so sensibly impaired as that of so many of Sir Joshua's beauties, shines forth to charm the end of a century widely indeed removed from that which admired them in their youthful prime.

The Streatham Gallery, which was Thrale's pet hobby, was, side by side with the more important productions, making good progress. Among those who had sat already were Thrale's own early friends, William Henry Lyttleton and Lord Sandys, and the master was working on Johnson, Goldsmith, Burke, Murphy, and Robert (afterwards Sir Robert) Chambers—one of the *intimes* of the Streatham circle, whose popularity with the other members of the set the lively hostess always expressed herself unable to understand.

The Johnson is that impressive likeness—so characteristically ponderous and argumentative in aspect, and, with all its realistic heaviness, so wonderfully full of vitality—which, with the rest of the Peel Collection, passed, in 1871, into the National Gallery. The Streatham picture was, however, itself a replica of the portrait painted in this year 1773 for Bennet Langton. Sir Joshua has permitted himself here no embellishment or idealisation,

save that, perhaps, he has put the Doctor's wig on rather straighter than it was worn by the original, and has not shown the shabby brown suit quite as unbrushed as it was. This is the very type of Johnson, the argumentative, the irrepressible, the overwhelming, from the Boswellian point of view—showing the Jupiter Tonans of the set, at whose nod all but the stoutest, even of the Titans, must quake. It would have been interesting to see the same rough-hewn, powerful features when the Doctor was in one of his terrible fits of hypochondriacal depression, or when at Streatham, and in his correspondence with its mistress, he played the spoilt child, and resented any intermission of the petting which, in that quarter, he exacted as a right. The "Goldsmith" was a replica of the picture exhibited at the Academy in 1770, and then purchased by the Duke of Dorset for Knole. This later example passed, on the sale of the Streatham pictures in 1816, into the possession of the Duke of Bedford.

It was at a dinner given by Sir Joshua in the early part of 1773, at which were present Garrick, Johnson, Fox, and others, that occurred the famous brush between Johnson and Dr Barnard, Dean of Derry, in which the former was so signally put to shame. The Dean had asserted that after the age of forty-five a man does not improve. "I differ with you, sir," said Johnson. "A man *may* improve; and you yourself have great room for improvement." The Dean was confounded, and for the instant silent. The company forced another subject, but it went, as such subjects must, heavily. The Dean recovering:—"On recollection, I see no cause to alter my opinion, except I was to call it improvement for a man to grow (which I allow he may) positive, rude, and insolent, and save arguments by brutality." *

* Burke "Correspondence," 1844, Vol. I. pp. 403-4.

The Dean sent, early next morning, to Reynolds, the following copy of verses, which must be quoted as one more testimony in favour of the master's proverbial serenity of temper :—

"Dear Knight of Plympton, teach me how
To suffer, with unclouded brow
And smile serene as thine,
The jest uncouth and truth severe ;
Like thee to turn my deafest ear,
And calmly drink my wine.

Thou say'st not only skill is gained,
But genius, too, may be attained
By studious invitation ;
Thy temper mild, thy genius fine,
I'll study till I make them mine
By constant meditation.

. . . . . .

If I have thoughts and can't express 'em,
Gibbon shall teach me how to dress 'em,
In terms select and terse ;
Jones teach me modesty and Greek ;
Smith how to think ; Burke how to speak ;
And Beauclerk to converse.

Let Johnson teach me how to place
In fairest light each borrowed grace ;
From him I'll learn to write ;
Copy his free and easy style,
And from the roughness of his file,
Grow like himself polite."

It would be unfair not to point out that Johnson showed, on this as on some other occasions, the childlike contrition, as of a naughty boy penitent, which disarms resentment. It is just this genuine tenderness of nature, overflowing through the thick upper crust of boundless self-esteem, that enabled the most aggressive man of his

time to retain to the end so many valuable friendships, where another, with less cause, perhaps, would have accumulated hatred around him. It is difficult—the confession has already been made—to account for the mighty lexicographer's influence on the best minds of his time by any wit, social charm, or wisdom, surviving in the many faithful transcripts which, from the most varied sources—not from the faithful Bozzy or the faithless Piozzi alone—have come down to us of his conversation and correspondence. The world loves an oracle, however, and when that oracle has sufficiently established itself, will accept all the paradoxes that fall from its lips, and read into them its own wisdom, much as it has done with the oracles of all time.

The Society of Arts, with a view to promote the development of monumental art, started this year a plan for the decoration, with a series of paintings in the grand style, of their new room in the Adelphi, the architects of which were the brothers Adam. They proposed the same artists who had been selected by the Academy for the decoration of St Paul's, with the addition of Wright of Derby, Romney, Mortimer, and Penny; part of the proposal being that the pictures should be exhibited, and the painters paid out of the profits of the exhibition.

The Academy failed to approve this scheme, possibly not relishing this renewed assertion of its independent position by the Society of Arts, and refusing to be influenced by the arguments of Barry, whose deep-seated convictions as to high art, and natural arrogance of disposition, led him to put himself prominently forward as the ardent suporter of a plan which he deemed would afford a fuller scope to his powers in that direction.*

* See also his *Inquiry into the Real and Imaginary Obstructions to the Acquisition of the Arts in England*, published in November 1774—with

The Irish painter's inordinate opinion of his abilities and artistic position led him at this time within measurable distance of a quarrel with his most generous friend and patron, Burke; the artist churlishly and ungratefully objecting to the practice, indulged in by the busy statesman, of dropping in without a fixed appointment to sit for a portrait which Barry was painting of him for Dr Brocklesby. "Why," says Burke's *protégé*, "should I be treated more cavalierly than Sir Joshua Reynolds?" To which Burke, nettled, but temperate and dignified, rejoins that he is sitting to the President for his portrait (one of the Streatham series), and that all the sittings have been without notice. The dispute was, however, made up, and Burke's sittings completed—with or without notice—since the picture appeared at the Academy in 1774.

Poor Goldsmith was, at this time, fast going down hill, both in health and as regards the state of his affairs. His income, averaging the, for that time, very comfortable sum of between £400 and £500 a year, should have amply sufficed for his wants, considering the modest scale of his living in the Temple. But the poet knew not the value of money, and was careless of the cost of fine clothes and fine dinners to the set—in which he must, perforce, vie with his more opulent fellows. Matters could not have been helped, either, by Goldsmith's practice of doctoring himself; his skill in medicine being so dubious, notwithstanding his pretensions, that, when, on one occasion, he announced his intention of prescribing in the future only for his friends, Beauclerk rejoined: "Change your resolve, dear doctor, and prescribe only for your enemies."

It was at one of the dinners at the St James's Coffee

its covert sneers at the lip-worship, by Sir Joshua, of Michelangelo, and its insinuations that he is playing the part of "dog in the manger," and throwing "blocks and impediments" in the way of serious art.

House that occurred the famous duel in epigram-writing between the poet and Garrick. Friends had incited Goldsmith to pit himself against the actor in his own particular line, and it was decided that each should write the other's epitaph. Garrick, the readier of the two, sat down and at once dashed off the immortal distich which, rightly or wrongly, will ever stick to Goldsmith, and mark out for posterity his place in the social life of the time:—

"Here lies Nolly Goldsmith, for shortness called 'Noll,'
Who wrote like an angel, but talked like poor Poll."

Goldsmith, less ready than his opponent, does not appear to have retorted on the spot; but he did not resent the palpable hit, and we are told that great good-humour reigned on all sides. The poet, however, at another dinner, a few days afterwards, produced his "Retaliation." The epitaph on Garrick, which formed part of it, is one of the most masterly portraits in words to be found in literature. It is one in which the whip of the satirist tells at every stroke, yet love so evidently tempers the hand of the castigator that it must have rendered the chastisement—administered, be it remembered, in self-defence—easy to be borne.

"Here lies David Garrick, describe me who can,
An abridgement of all that was pleasant in man;
As an actor, confess'd without rival to shine,
As a wit, if not first, in the very first line;
Yet, with talents like these, and an excellent heart,
The man had his failings, a dupe to his art.
Like an ill-judging beauty his colours he spread,
And beplaster'd with rouge his own natural red.
On the stage he was natural, simple, affecting,
'Twas only that when he was off he was acting.
With no reason on earth to go out of his way,
He turn'd and he varied full ten times a day.
Though secure of our hearts, yet confoundedly sick,

If they were not his own by finessing and trick:
He cast off his friends, as a huntsman his pack,
For he knew, when he pleas'd, he could whistle them back.
Of praise a mere glutton, he swallow'd what came,
And the puff of a dunce he mistook for fame;
Till his relish grown callous, almost to disease,
Who pepper'd the highest was surest to please.
But let us be candid, and speak out our mind,
If dunces applauded, he paid them in kind.
Ye Kenricks, ye Kellys, and Woodfalls so grave,
What a commerce was yours while you got and you gave,
How did Grub Street re-echo the shouts that you rais'd,
While he was be-Roscius'd, and you were be-prais'd!
But peace to his spirit, wherever it flies,
To act as an angel, and mix with the skies:
Those poets, who owe their best fame to his skill,
Shall still be his flatterers, go where he will;
Old Shakespeare receive him, with praise, and with love,
And Beaumonts and Bens be his Kellys above!"

The epitaph on Reynolds, which has remained as popular as that of Garrick on the poet himself, was left unfinished at the time of his death:—

"Here Reynolds is laid, and to tell you my mind,
He has not left a wiser or better behind.
His pencil was striking, resistless, and grand,
His manners were gentle, complying, and bland;
Still born to improve us in every part—
His pencil our faces, his manners our heart.
To coxcombs averse, yet most civilly steering,
When they judged without skill, he was still hard of hearing;
When they talked of their Raphaels, Correggios, and stuff,
He shifted his trumpet and only took snuff.
By flattery unspoiled. . ."

Here is a portrait, painted in fair, clear hues by the hand of friendship, which, incomparably better and more

amiably expressed, must be taken as the pendant and the complement of Mrs Thrale's more sharply bitten outline. It is characteristic of the author that, while the art of our master—of which, indeed, neither Goldsmith, Johnson, nor any of the set presumed to be judges—is but vaguely defined, and without special felicity, his character is hit off with an unsurpassable charm, such as only the affectionate regard of friend for friend, shining through the playful humour of the man of letters, could give.

The epitaph on Reynolds is rendered doubly pathetic when it is remembered that its author was, a few short weeks afterwards, to be laid in his grave in the little churchyard of the Temple. Goldsmith was taken ill on or about the 25th of March, and called in the assistance of the surgeon-apothecary Mr Hawes, who summoned Dr Fordyce. The true cause of his disorder was doubtless that assigned in Dr Johnson's letter of July 5th to Bennet Langton, in which he says :—"He died of a fever, exasperated, as I believe, by the fear of distress. He had raised money, and squandered it by every artifice of acquisition and folly of expense. But let not his frailties be remembered ; he was a very great man."

In another letter, addressed to Boswell, he adds :—"Sir Joshua is of opinion that he owed not less than two thousand pounds. Was ever poet so trusted before ?"

Horace Walpole has, by innuendo, accused Reynolds and his circle of neglecting Goldsmith in his last moments. In a letter of April 7th, addressed to his friend the Rev. William Mason, he writes :—

"Dr Goldsmith is dead of a purple fever, and I think might have been saved if he had continued James's powders, which had had much effect, but his physicians interposed. His numerous friends neglected him shamefully at last,

as if they had no business with him when it was too serious to laugh. He had lately written epitaphs for them all, some of which hurt, and perhaps made them not sorry that his own was the first necessary. The poor soul had sometimes parts, though never common sense."

The value of this malevolent piece of gossip should be estimated by the misrepresentations embedded in the partial truth of the passage. We have seen that Goldsmith was not the attacker, but the attacked, and that his genial "Retaliation" contained, on the whole, far more honey than wormwood. Again, though positive disproof of Walpole's accusation is not forthcoming, all the probabilities bid us side with Leslie in his defence of Reynolds, and his repudiation of the cruel insinuation. It is indeed unlikely that Sir Joshua would, throughout his life, have shown for Goldsmith an almost feminine tenderness and regard, only to fail him at the supreme moment. The man who could unhesitatingly obey Gainsborough's summons to his bed of sickness and death, who could take leave in amity and regret of the great rival who in life had treated him with unmerited distrust and aversion, was little likely to shrink from consoling the last moments of the most dearly beloved of his friends. Northcote's testimony is that, on the day of Goldsmith's death, Reynolds forsook his painting-room for a whole day—"a circumstance," he goes on to say, "the most extraordinary for him, who passed no day without a line." He had not been known thus to indulge his grief on the death of any other friend or relation.

A funeral in Westminster Abbey had at first been projected, but was abandoned in order that the money it would have cost might be reserved for a monument to be put up there. Such a one was, two years after, carried out at the expense of The Club; it bears a medallion by

Nollekens and the well-known epitaph by Dr Johnson.

That which has given some colour to the assertion that Sir Joshua neglected his dying friend is the fact that he was not present at the funeral on the 9th of April, but was represented by his nephew, the Rev. Joseph Palmer, who acted as chief mourner. A sudden and temporary indisposition might well account, however, for this recorded absence, and the assumption of some such cause is the less gratuitous, seeing that the master has just been shown to have given signs of an emotion such as he yielded to on no other occasion.

The Exhibition of the Royal Academy, which opens as usual in the month of April, counts, this time, 364 works. Gainsborough is still in the sulks, so that the gallery contains nothing from his brush. Barry, besides Burke's portrait, so nearly a cause of rupture between the friends, contributes "King Lear and Cordelia," "Mercury inventing the Lyre," and "Antiochus and Stratonice." Cipriani sends several classicalities; Nathaniel Dance, a full-length "Orpheus;" and Angelica Kauffmann, six canvases. The veteran Liotard is also represented by two works in oils—a medium in which he never excelled. De Loutherbourg has a "Portrait of Garrick as Don John," with a "Moonlight View of Naples," which has now found its way into the South Kensington Museum. Northcote shows "St Catherine," and the portrait of an old gentleman; West, three sacred subjects; Vandergucht, "Woodward as Petruchio," now in the Garrick Club; and Wilson, Italian, Welsh, and English landscapes.

Sir Joshua's contributions consist of no less than thirteen pictures:—

A full-length of Maria Walpole, Duchess of Glou-

cester, with Princess Sophia of Gloucester (No. 96 at the Guelph Exhibition)—in which the former Countess Waldegrave appears holding with both arms her child, who stands on the arm of a chair, with a pretty movement, caressing her mother's chin with her right hand.

A delicious portrait-study of the little Princess Sophia, alone — rolling on the ground, with her arms tightly clasped round the neck of a favourite lap-dog (now in the Royal Collection at Hampton Court).

The "Three Ladies adorning a Term of Hymen" (No. 79 in the National Gallery).

A full-length of "Mrs Tollemache as Miranda" (the lady charming, but the Caliban absurd). It was formerly in Lord Tollemache's collection at Peckforton Castle.

Another full-length of a lady.

"Lady Cockburn and her Children" (No. 1365 in the National Gallery).

Lord Bellamont in the Robes of the Bath.

The portrait of Dr Beattie called "The Triumph of Truth" (with the personifications supposed to represent Voltaire, Hume, and Gibbon).

A half-length of Bishop Newton.

The portrait of Baretti reading (now at Holland House).

The full-length of a son of Lord Edgcumbe.

Another portrait of a gentleman.

An "Infant Jupiter"—the precursor in its weightiness of the "Infant Hercules").

It is easy to credit the anecdote that, when the "Lady Cockburn with her Children" was brought into the exhibition to be hung, it was saluted by the assembled painters with a general clapping of hands; so rich are still the tawny splendours of its colour, so fresh and

brilliant the flesh-painting, so completely does it show the sumptuous mode of the third and last style, while retaining much of the firmness and solidity of the second.

Sir Joshua's favourite birds are, both of them, utilised in the year's display of pictures. The macaw is, as we have seen, put into the "Lady Cockburn" as an adjunct to the composition and scheme of colour, and is there, alas! represented as if it were already stuffed; so little does it suggest the vigorous bird that attacked, with a persistent and relentless enmity, Northcote's portrait of the Leicester Fields' housemaid, with whom it did not live on good terms. The eagle, whose eyry in the presidential establishment has been in the back area, is depicted soaring over the head of the Infant Jupiter. The poor dethroned monarch having perished in its dishonourable captivity, Northcote hung up its body, with wings extended, and was proceeding to make a study from it when Reynolds came in, and, struck with the effect of the bird, carried away both it and Northcote's sketch, giving it, says the latter, "in about a quarter of an hour, such touches of animation as made it truly fine."

It was now that Gainsborough, who, since 1760, had enjoyed a career of uninterrupted success at Bath—finally obtaining there, for portraits, forty guineas for a half-length and a hundred guineas for a whole-length—came up to London, in consequence of some disagreement with his patron and friend, Philip Thicknesse, concerning that eccentric gentleman's unfinished portrait. He established himself definitively at Schomberg House, Pall Mall, for a portion of which he paid John Astley, the painter, no less than £300 a year. Though temporarily at feud with the King's Academy, he was at once on his arrival, summoned to the palace, where he soon established a position in marked contrast with

that merely official one which was all that Sir Joshua had been able to achieve in this, almost the only circle into which he never succeeded in penetrating. Gainsborough's unending succession of portraits of the King, the Queen and their family, afford the best testimony of the value that the Court set upon his efforts.

Often as the parallel between the rival painters has been attempted, little as there may be left to say on the subject, it is difficult to resist the temptation of once more comparing and contrasting, in some salient points, the two most brilliant figures of their day in English art. Under the cover of a superficial similarity, attributable to the time rather than to the men themselves, there is between them so instructive a contrast in essentials, that, the two personalities being juxtaposed, the one causes the other to stand out with additional distinctness.

As Michelangelo's genius rather taught Raphael to know his own than otherwise permanently influenced him, so—to parallel the less with the greater—it was Sir Joshua's example, his revolution in the manner of English portraiture, which must have shown Gainsborough the way over, or through, old-fashioned obstacles; which must have enabled him to shake out his own wings, and fly unaided. But, in other respects, there can be little or no question of an influence exerted by one of the great portraitists on the other. Their technical methods, their colouring, their manner of looking at the humanity they portrayed, were not more widely divergent than the men themselves were dissimilar in all respects.

Gainsborough was nervous and irritable, but also passionate and loving—just the man to have constant squabbles with his "kindest and loveliest of wives," and to make them up again with genuine enjoyment. He had none of Sir Joshua's love of the great world,

or capacity for pleasing in it; none of his exquisite urbanity or his curious and sympathetic observance of humanity in its social aspects. On the contrary, even in London, he remained practically a stay-at-home, a man of few friends, though among these might be numbered Burke, Sheridan, Garrick, and Sir George Beaumont.

Music was his recreation, where literature was Sir Joshua's; and his love of nature, his then unsurpassed power of presenting some of her most seductive aspects, opened out for him many vistas which had never more than a subsidiary attraction for his contemporary.

Gainsborough's irritability of temperament became, in his art, brilliancy and vivacity. Sir Joshua's suavity and evenness was reflected in a certain unemotional graciousness which marked much of his female portraiture, while the firmness and tenacity which underlay these qualities came out in his virile presentments of the stronger sex. It is amusing to contrast, for instance, the magnificent compliments which, as we shall presently see, were paid by Sir Joshua to Mrs Siddons when she sat to him, with the anecdote—at any rate characteristic and *ben trovato*—which makes Gainsborough, when painting her, throw down his brushes in a passion, exclaiming:—"D—n the nose, there's no end to it!"

It is difficult to explain away the fact that, when Reynolds, soon after Gainsborough's arrival in London, called upon him, the visit was not returned, with the result that, for several years, there was no intercourse between them. Whether the newcomer's conduct is to be explained by carelessness of usage and lack of sympathy, or by jealousy of the unassailable position, social and artistic, that the President had made for himself in London, we can do no more than surmise.

Another interesting point of difference between the

artists is that we possess, from Sir Joshua's brush, a most complete and varied series of portraits of himself, while those in which Gainsborough has depicted his own features are few and far between. The best known are that presented to the Royal Academy by his elder daughter (No. 1 at the Grosvenor Gallery Exhibition in 1885), and that which was lent by Mrs William Sharpe to the Guelph Exhibition (No. 271—purchased in 1840 from the Gainsborough family).

Sir Joshua was an eclectic, fed on Roman, Bolognese, Venetian, Flemish, and Dutch art, though giving his own personal colouring to all that he imitated and appropriated. He would borrow a design or suggestion from Michelangelo, learn much from the lighting and colour-harmonies of Rembrandt, the breadth and decorative splendour of the Venetians, the method of Rubens in some technical particulars. Gainsborough, though in the beginning avowedly influenced in landscape by the Dutch masters, was, in portraiture, entirely himself. In his colouring—save in some important landscapes—he did not seek the aid of bituminous depths of shadow heightening the lights, or affect the sunset glow, the luscious splendours of Reynolds. It was the more natural, the more evenly-diffused daylight, in which he strove to enwrap his figures. His sober exquisiteness of colour, more potent in effect than the richness of his rival, was compounded, like the hue of the opal, of the subtler fresher tints, harmonised and held together with an unerring intuition, and producing as their general effect the silver sheen for which he is famous. Gainsborough suggests the tender hues of a brilliant morning before the sun has attained its full power, Reynolds the glow of sunset when it is sinking to the horizon.

And again, it is curious that, with all his dainty grace,

his well-tempered realism in depicting the charms of childhood—and, above all, of rustic childhood—in such famous performances as "The Cottage Door," the "Rustic Children," and the "Girl with Pigs," Gainsborough shows less sympathy, less heart, than does Sir Joshua, the childless, in his inimitable urchins masquerading as heathen deities, his Strawberry Girls, his deliciously naïve little ladies gazing at you with timid, mouse-like eyes out of the transparent shadow cast by huge, extinguishing hats.

Gainsborough, in his best portraits, does not look, for special action, does not attempt special characterisation of dominant idiosyncrasies, or surround his figures with specially significant accessories; he prefers to render the pulsating life, the suggestion in repose of impending movement. He prefers to give the physical and mental individuality welded into one, asserting itself in a simple conception of no imported dramatic significance, rather than to attempt a complete expression of the intellectual personality and a suggestion of some typical incident in the career of the personage portrayed—an attempt in which Reynolds so admirably succeeds in his best male portraits. It is less "the mind and music breathing from the face"—prettily said somewhere to be Gainsborough's chief characteristic in portraiture—than the intense vitality, the living, breathing presentment of humanity in some of its most gracious and refined, if not its subtlest, phases—the flash of the eye, the life in the flexible lips—that we should note as the essential qualities of a Gainsborough portrait.

As a painter, as a master of the brush, he certainly, in his happiest achievements—in such canvases as the "Mrs Portman of Bryanston," the "Blue Boy," the "Painter's Two Daughters," the "Two Sisters" (alas! no longer more than a memory), the "Mrs Sheridan," the "Colonel

St Leger," the "Ferdinando Tenducci," the "Fisher the Violinist"—rises superior in power and in technical results to Sir Joshua. His brilliant frankness of execution—when it does not, as too often, degenerate into emptiness and carelessness—his beauty and homogeneity of tone, his force of impression, go to make up a pictorial whole with which even the more sumptuous tints, the richer depths, the more gracious charm of Reynolds can hardly vie.

On the other hand, our master has—as Gainsborough himself owned—an infinite variety in his conceptions, an inexhaustible inventiveness in pose and attitude, such as make of each of his portraits a distinctive and not easily forgotten picture. Indeed, in this peculiar quality, so precious to the portraitist, he has known only one equal in the whole range of art, and that is Rembrandt himself. He brings out, with a keenness of grasp and an intuitive sympathy to which his rival can lay no claim, such commanding personalities of his time as Johnson, Gibbon, Baretti, Banks, Hunter, and other men of the same calibre. His female portraiture, if it is marked by a less degree of vitality, has a higher degree of distinction and breeding, as distinguished from mere modish elegance. His portrait-gallery of children is a world of his own, which cannot be exactly paralleled with anything that any other artist, whatever his rank, has produced of the same kind. Its infinite charm and pathos would be sought for in vain in even the loveliest and most engaging of Gainsborough's picturesquely ragged cottagers and rustics.

This was the year of Burke's triumphant return for Bristol in the interest of the Opposition, while Johnson was bringing out his pamphlet, *The Patriot*, backing up the Ministry in its attempts to coerce the American colonists, and justifying the Ministerialists in their course of action with regard to the Middlesex Election. All the

turbulence of Wilkes had subsided, and he had almost, by comparison with the patriot of former times, become a reactionary. Being duly elected to fill the office of Lord Mayor, he is stated to have performed his civic duties with all requisite dignity and geniality, being well seconded by his daughter Mary as Lady Mayoress. Doubtless Reynolds, who had been his fast friend, even when he was an outlaw scaring and successfully defying the Government, now partook of the hospitalities which he freely dispensed in his new representative position.

It is a little puzzling to note that, although Gainsborough is at this particular moment not contributing to the Academy exhibitions, he is, at the end of the present year, upon the transfer of his household gods to London, elected a member of the council, receiving even, in some inexplicable way, one vote for the office of president.

On the 10th of December, which was, as usual, the occasion of the distribution of medals to the successful students, Sir Joshua delivered his Sixth Discourse.

One of Reynolds's loveliest sitters this year is Eliza Ann Linley, the exquisite young singer and reigning beauty of Bath, who had, in 1772, become, by a runaway match, the wife of Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

The Linley family, children of the composer Linley, are described as "a nest of nightingales." Eliza, the beauty, then not more than sixteen, was very much run after by suitors—not all of them actuated by what our neighbours call the *bon motif*. She was distressed by the importunities of one Mathews, a married man, who actually managed, it would seem, by his persistence, to win the young creature's affections or, at any rate, to persuade her that she was interested in him. Sheridan, himself a boy of nineteen, here intervened—at first only in the character of the confidential friend—and escorted

Miss Linley to a nunnery in France; but it appears that the youthful couple, in order to protect the lady's character, went through the form of marriage during their flight. He, on his return, gave a still more romantic seasoning to the adventure by fighting two duels with Mathews. Moreover, he chivalrously abstained from openly claiming his wife, and was even for some time denied access to her by her father, who disapproved of the connection. The Sheridans were, however, at last publicly married in April 1773.

Before her marriage, Miss Linley had achieved great success as a public singer, appearing in oratorios and concerts, not only at Bath and Oxford, but in London, where, according to Walpole, she even attracted the admiring attention of good King George. Her singularly touching and fragile beauty, her pathetic expression, contributed as much to her success as her fresh, lovely voice.

Sir Joshua first met the handsome young people, as a married couple, at the musical parties given by a Mr Coote, whose little daughters he afterwards introduced as angels attending St Cecilia, in the famous picture upon which he was, in the beginning of 1775, at work. There was thus nothing forced in this, as in not a few of Sir Joshua's "high-falutin'" personifications; the purity, the supremacy in song, the gentleness of Mrs Sheridan, who had even previously been known as "the Saint," would suggest her naturally as the embodiment of the young Roman maiden. The master has depicted her seated at a harpsichord, clothed in a generalised costume —nearly a drapery—of warm white, of no especial fashion or period—well expressing either the saint or the woman. She sings, or is about to sing, and the angel-children in attendance sing with her. The form is but vaguely expressed, the seated figure does not truly sit; but yet the

wrapt expression of the inspired young face, marred by no insipidity or self-consciousness, the warm, suffused glow of the almost monochromatic colour, are, even in the present injured state of the work, irresistible.*

The picture has passed from the Marquis of Lansdowne's collection at Bowood into that of Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild. The Corporation Gallery of Glasgow contains a charming unfinished sketch by Sir Joshua, showing Mrs Sheridan, in the freshness of her youthful beauty, wearing a simple costume of her own day. This the catalogue of the gallery calls a preliminary study for the "St Cecilia," but there is nothing in the pose to suggest any such connection with it.

Gainsborough has painted the same lady, with her sister Maria (afterwards wife of Sheridan's friend, Richard Tickell), in a large portrait-group of unsurpassed charm, one of the brightest ornaments of the Dulwich College Gallery. Later on, in 1783, the same artist exhibits another full-length, in which his exquisite sitter appears, still radiant in beauty, seated under a tree—a masterpiece which was formerly at Delapré Abbey, and is now in the collection of Lord Rothschild at Tring Park.

The artists of that time indulged themselves—almost all of them, save Reynolds himself—in the bickerings, the meannesses, the petty jealousies, which, in England at any rate, they have now had the good sense to cast aside, leaving them to that curious tribe the opera-singers, to whom they as of right belong. More than one storm raged round the exhibition this year, and even Sir

* Reynolds probably got the first idea of his picture from the full-blown "St Cecilia" of Rubens, now in the Berlin Gallery (engraved by Jean Witdœck). Here also the saint (Helena Fourment) sits at the harpsichord, attended by angels. Another very similar version of the subject, also by the Antwerp master, was in the Beurnonville Collection, and has been etched by Guillaume Panneels.

Joshua's proverbial equanimity must have been a little disturbed.

First the fair Angelica, professing dissatisfaction with the way in which some of her pictures had been hung, appealed, through her friend the President, to the Council, and was then bidden come and see for herself whether they had not been well treated. A more memorable hubbub was that excited by Nathaniel Hone's picture, "The Pictorial Conjuror displaying the whole Art of Optical Deception."

Hone was an old acquaintance of Reynolds, a few years senior to him—since he was born in 1718—and grounded in the old Hudson style, which he never completely shook off. He had been at Rome in 1750 and 1751, and at Florence in 1752, as is shown by Sir Joshua's note-books, in one of which there is a caricature of Hone. Established in St James's Place as a miniaturist, enameller, and, later on, as a painter in oils, he had been more successful in the former than in the latter branch of his profession. Still, that he had attained a considerable degree of note is shown by the fact that he had been one of the most regular contributors to the Society of Incorporated Artists. He sent to one of its exhibitions, among other things, a portrait of Lord March's *chère amie*, the too youthful dancer La Zamperini—as "Cecchina." (This vivacious little lady is also noted among Sir Joshua's visitors, if not actually as one of his sitters.) Other contributions had been a "Portrait of the Rev. George Whitefield," and "Diogenes in search of an Honest Man." We have seen that he was one of the foundation members of the Royal Academy. In 1770 he had already got into some trouble with his picture of Captain Grose and Theophilus Forrest masquerading as friars, the treatment of which was considered so irreverent that it had to be altered. Now, imprudently

giving vent to the envy of the President's brilliant success which he had long nourished, he, in this "Pictorial Conjuror," presented him in the figure of an old man, with a wand in his hand, and a child leaning on his knee, performing incantations, by which a number of prints and designs, from which the master was supposed to have taken hints, were made to float in the air round the wizard. It was not, however, the attack upon Reynolds that impelled the Academy to turn out the painted satire before the opening of the exhibition, but the circumstance that a nude figure, resembling Angelica Kauffmann, appeared in one of the floating sketches. If this was indeed the case—and Hone himself strenuously denied it—the notion would, doubtless, have been to wound the President in his tenderest susceptibilities, since, whatever might be the exact nature of his relations with Angelica, an affectionate friendship was clearly maintained between them, unclouded by any of those imaginary dramatic incidents woven into the story by later biographers. Hone wrote to Angelica, indignantly denying the charge made against him, and offering to metamorphose the offensive figure by the addition of a beard and man's attire. She nevertheless, maintained an attitude of cold reserve, and the Council of the Academy, unappeased by all these protestations, signified to him that the "Pictorial Conjuror" was to be withdrawn, and that the rest of the pictures contributed by him that year would, if sent for, be returned.

Hone, thereupon, arranged an exhibition of his works, sixty-six in number, with the peccant "Conjuror" as a centre of attraction. In this he had managed, meanwhile, to remove the fair Kauffmann's cause of complaint, and, at the same time, to barb the satire against Reynolds by putting garments on his nude academic models, and making these resemble well-known portraits by the

master. The rebellious academician had, before opening his private show, sworn before a Middlesex magistrate that he had never introduced any figure reflecting on Mrs Angelica Kauffmann, or any other lady whatever.

He does not appear to have been otherwise suspended from his privileges as a member of the Academy, since he continued to exhibit there down to the date of his death, in 1784. His portrait by himself, painted in early years, is in the National Portrait Gallery, and the Diploma Gallery of the Royal Academy contains another version of his features, belonging to a considerably later period.

It is of the Academy exhibition of 1775 that Horace Walpole writes the following well-known passage of criticism to his friend, Sir Mann :—

"I dined to-day at the exhibition of pictures, with the Royal Academicians. We do not beat Titian or Guido yet. Zoffani has sent over a wretched 'Holy Family.' What is he doing? Does he return, or go to Russia, as they say? He is the Hogarth of Dutch * painting, but, no more than Hogarth, can shine out of his own way. He might have drawn the Holy Family well, if he had seen them in *statu quo*. Sir Joshua Reynolds is a great painter; but, unfortunately, his colours seldom stand longer than crayons. We have a Swede, one Loutherbourg, who would paint landscape and cattle excellently, if he did not, in every picture, indulge some one colour inordinately. Horses, dogs, and animals we paint admirably, and a few landscapes well. The prices of all are outrageous, and the number of professors still greater. We have an American, West, who deals in high history, and is vastly

* Zoffany was not Dutch, but a native of Frankfort-on-the-Main. De Loutherbourg was, as had been seen, an Alsatian.

admired; but he is heavier than Guercino, and has still less grace, and is very inferior. We have almost a statuary or two, and very good architects; but as Vanbrugh dealt in quarries, and Kent in lumber, Adam our most admired, is all gingerbread, filigraine and fan-painting. Wyatt, less fashionable, has as much taste, is grander, and more pure. We have private houses that cost more than the Palace Pitti. Will you never come and see your fine country before it is undone?"

This passage gives pretty fairly the merits and weaknesses of the arch-dilettante as a critic of art. It is, indeed, too much the fashion just now to pooh-pooh indiscriminately all his utterances in the way of serious criticism, because his name is associated with the contemptible form of gingerbread Gothic which he promoted, and because he carried to excess that worship of the Carracci, Guido, Domenichino, and the Bolognese generally, which Sir Joshua himself, as his Discourses show, shared to the full. Walpole was certainly not one of those epoch-making critics who are in advance of their time, and assume to lead taste into new channels, but he had, on the whole, a wider and more general artistic culture than any of his English contemporaries. It should be remembered to his credit that he could, at a time when art was very generally deemed to begin with the sixteenth century, appreciate the frescoes of Masolino, Masaccio, and Filippino Lippi in the Carmine chapel, and see deeper into the beauties of the "hard Flemish manner," into the art of Holbein and his time, than did any connoisseur of his day who could be mentioned.

There is often in his remarks, in his annotations to Academy catalogues, the acidity and querulousness, the affectation of superiority so difficult to dissociate

from the critical temperament. On the other hand, a certain aloofness, a certain power of stepping back so as to look at things from a distance, gives to his judgments a distinct value, placing them on a footing entirely different from those of such a professional flagellant as the humorous Peter Pindar, or any of the tribe of inferior imitators. And then these last could only judge what they saw from what they saw; they had, perforce, to take the thing to be judged by itself and without its environment, and pretended not at all to any knowledge of the history of art or of its various schools.

In this very passage just quoted, Walpole shows his subtlety by likening Zoffany, with his literalness lighted up by humour, to Hogarth, of whose stand-point in art he was, at that period almost the sole representative. And even among his beloved Bolognese he can find it in his heart to blame the heaviness of Guercino, and to cast contempt upon him by the parallel with Benjamin West.

Of any larger and wider effort than that involved in the criticism of individual works, from the point of view of the practised dilettante, and the man of sense rather than of sensibility, Walpole was not capable; to a mind of his type that wide generalisation in the theoretic discussion of art, for which Sir Joshua has so often been taken to task, would have been entirely foreign and distasteful.

His was not the sympathetic intuition which could unaided grasp and reveal to others the beauties of such art as that of Wilson, the English Claude—never honoured during his lifetime with more than that patronising kind of semi-approval which is equivalent to almost total neglect. The forlorn great master showed, at this exhibition, both Italian and English subjects: "The Mont Cenis," "A View from Muswell Hill," "The Lake of Nemi,

and "A Hermitage at Marino." Another of England's greatest landscapists, the water-colour painter Alexander Cozens, who exhibited drawings on this same occasion, was not appreciated during his lifetime at his true value, perhaps because the medium he had chosen to work in in a certain sense condemned those who practised it to a permanent inferiority of status. In his delicately-tinted, almost monochromatic drawings he expresses the serene beauties of Italian landscape with an unexaggerated truth, with a solemn pathos, such as none of the bright luminaries of water-colour, his successors—not even Turner himself—has been able to exceed if, indeed, to equal.

Sir Joshua's contribution to the year's pictures consisted of twelve canvases :—A full-length of the Countess of Dysart (probably the picture at Ham House), and two other full-lengths of ladies ; "Lord Ferrers ;" the famous "Mrs Sheridan as St Cecilia," to which reference has already been made ; a splendid half-length of Dr Robinson, Primate of Ireland (now at Christchurch, Oxford).

It is of this last picture that Horace Walpole, writing to William Mason, says :—

"Sir Joshua has produced the best portrait he ever painted, that of the Primate of Ireland, whom age has softened into a beauty ; all the painters are begging to draw him, as they did from Reynolds's beggar man."

The other contributions are :—"The Duke of Leinster ;" "The Duchess of Gordon ;" "The Children of the Duke of Rutland ;" a three-quarter length of a gentleman ; a "Beggar-boy, and his Sister." (The so-called 'Boy with Cabbage Nets," now at Knole.)

To this year belongs the still well-preserved "Portrait of Miss Bowles," which, as a splendid piece of execution,

giving perfect realisation to a conception of characteristic spontaneity and freshness, has hardly a superior among the productions of Sir Joshua.* The motive is a simple one, the charm of which owes little or nothing to artifice : a lovely, bright-eyed child, seated on the ground, looks gleefully out of the canvas as she hugs a dog. To Leslie and Taylor the reader must be referred for an amusing anecdote of the fashion in which our master coaxed the little thing, and won her over by a thousand kindly little tricks—until, when she sat to him, it was with a glee the overflow of which he has, with a kind of magic of his own, left on the canvas. Such pictures of children as those of which he, and he alone, had the secret, could only—it had already been repeated, perhaps *ad nauseam*—be produced by a loving sympathy inspiring a brush perfectly responsive; and it is thus doubly interesting to meet with an anecdote of this kind, proving that the master was really filled with this love that he so convincingly expressed.

It is a truism to say that the exterior loveliness of women had no more skilful interpreter than he; but perhaps he succeeded but moderately well in environing them with that imperceptible atmosphere of love and sympathy which gives the unique charm to his children, whether they are the curled darlings of his aristocratic friends and sitters, or the merry, careless ragamuffins of the pavement. The contrary is, we think, the case with Gainsborough, who better understood *das ewig Weibliche*—the element of sex—in his sitters, and was more closely in touch with all their most distinctive charms and foibles; while his children, with all their exterior grace, are—be it said without disrespect—but

* In the collection of Lady Wallace at Manchester House, and by her lent to the Old Masters in 1892.

mincing dolls in comparison with those of his great contemporary.

It was in this year that Romney, newly returned from Italy, definitively set up in London, establishing himself at the house in Cavendish Square which had formerly been tenanted by Cotes. He was at this period already a mature artist of upwards of forty years of age, well-known from previous success in town, and more particularly as a contributor to the exhibitions of the Incorporated Society of Artists; but his Italian journey had cast a new halo round him, and added a new savour of classicality and sculptural simplicity to his style.

As far back as 1756, after having impulsively married at Kendal a young woman who had nursed him in a fever, he had started as a painter on his own account, travelling through the northern counties, and painting portraits with much acceptance at a couple of guineas a head. Coming to London on the proceeds of his art-industry, he competed for the prizes offered by the Society of Arts, and his "Death of General Wolfe" was by the judges deemed worthy of the second prize. The story is that words of praise from Sir Joshua caused the premium, nevertheless, to be adjudged to Mortimer for his "Edward the Confessor," and that Romney had to content himself with a donation of £50; whence—so again speaks the legend—a coolness with the elder master, which subsequently prevented the younger from presenting himself at the Royal Academy, or exhibiting there. So much bitterness for so small a matter seems hard to understand, even in those days of constant friction between artists, and we must find other and more normal causes for the standing aloof of Romney—not by any means, as has been seen, the only artist who did so stand aloof—when he finally set up his studio and household in Cavendish Square.

In Paris he had been befriended by Joseph Vernet, the noted marine and landscape painter, and founder of the Vernet dynasty of artists. Becoming, in 1766, a member of the Incorporated Society, he set up in the fashionable artists' quarter of Newport Street, and was soon earning an income estimated at as much as £1200 a year. It was then that he painted Mrs Yates as the "Tragic Muse," his picture being thus the precursor of Sir Joshua's, just as this great tragic actress was the precursor of Mrs Siddons, by whom her fame with posterity has been too much eclipsed. Seized in the midst of his success with an irrepressible desire to visit Italy, Romney had in 1773 thrown up everything, and departed thither with Ozias Humphrey the miniature-painter; subsequently, however, severing himself from his travelling companion, in order that he might in solitude undertake serious and prolonged studies in the Vatican, and afterwards at Parma—where the *deus loci*, Correggio, produced a profound impression upon him. The grand style was the aim that Romney, like so many of his contemporaries, had constantly before him; and though, luckily for English art, the tide of fashion in his favour as a portraitist was too strong to admit of the full development of his art in other directions, his tardy studies nevertheless left a lasting and, on the whole, a beneficial impression on his manner in portraiture—giving dignity and simplicity, as well as grace and charm, and enabling him to avoid the snare of affectation, into which even his greater contemporaries not infrequently fell.

Into direct competition with Sir Joshua, on the walls of the Academy, Romney thus never entered; for, as we have seen, he never exhibited there. This was ostensibly because, as a continuing member of the Incorporated Society of Artists, he was not, according to the rules of the Academy, eligible for membership; but there can be little

doubt that had he, at any time, entertained the serious desire of making one of the Forty, he would easily have found means, so brilliant was his position, to gratify the wish.

It would be less than fair to omit pointing out that Romney, whatever his friends and backers might do, never put himself forward as the rival of Reynolds, or would allow any disparagement of the latter in his presence. "No, no," he declared, "he is the greatest painter that ever lived;" for I see in his pictures an exquisite charm which I see in nature, but in no other pictures. None the less was Romney, from this time onwards, a formidable competitor of the President for the favour of the public, who had to pay less dearly for his portraits than for those of the latter, while doubtless the classic simplicity of his designs was peculiarly suited to hit the popular taste in this last quarter of the eighteenth century, during which the neo-classic was to attain a greater and still greater ascendency.

It was not until some eight years after his permanent establishment in London that he came in contact with the woman to whose celebrity, by his famous series of portraits and studies, he contributed to the full as much as even Lord Nelson himself. Emma Lyon or Hart, afterwards Lady Hamilton, and Romney's "Magdalen," his "Joan of Arc," his "Circe," his "Bacchante," his "Cassandra," his "Spinning Girl," was, in this year, 1775, but a child of eleven years. The painter's fame had long been at its zenith when her beauty blazed upon him, wounding the mature artist beyond recovery, but causing him to infuse so concentrated a passion into his numberless studies of her features and form, that he was paid for his suffering by the gain to his suave and beautiful art. He had, even at the period with which we are now dealing, long since

cut himself practically adrift from all family ties; his wife had been left at Kendal in 1762, when he set out to try his fortunes in the capital, and he returned to the patient Griselda only twice in the course of thirty-seven years—the long period of his maturity and success. It was only in 1799 that, miserable and broken in mind and body, he finally abandoned London—or rather Hampstead, where he then resided—and returned to his wife and his old home in the north, only to die there three years later. It is this final episode of Romney's career that Tennyson has treated with intense pathos in one of his latest poems, "Romney's Remorse," included in the volume *Demeter, and other Poems.*

The following passage, given by the poet as the key-note of his study, is well worth quoting:—

"How touching is the close of his life! He married at nineteen, and, because Sir Joshua and others had said that 'marriage spoilt an artist,' almost immediately left his wife in the north, and scarce saw her until the end of his life; when old, nearly mad, and quite desolate, he went back to her and she received him, and nursed him till he died. This quiet act of hers is worth all Romney's pictures!—even as a matter of art, I am sure!" *

It was at this time, too, that painstaking, plodding, useful Northcote brought to an end his long apprenticeship with Sir Joshua, thinking, very naturally, that after five years passed with the most highly-esteemed, the most fashionable of English masters, it was time that, at his age, he should proceed to make a position for himself. It is best to let him give his own account of the parting:—

* *Letters and Literary Remains of Edward Fitzgerald*, vol. i.

"I therefore thought it proper to give Sir Joshua notice of my intentions some months before my departure. This, however, was a task very disagreeable to me, and I deferred it from day to day, but at last determined; and going to him one morning in the month of December, when he was alone in his painting-room, I began by saying that, at the end of May next, it would be five years since I first came to his house. Sir Joshua, with a gentleness in his manner, said that he thought that was full sufficient, and that I was now well able to do for myself. I then replied that I was very sensible of the obligation I owed him, and that I would stay any time longer he should think proper, if I could be of any service to him. Sir Joshua said by no means, as I had already done him much service. I answered that I feared I had not been of so much assistance to him as I wished, but that it was solely from want of power, and not inclination. Sir Joshua was so obliging as to say that I had been very useful to him, more so than any scholar that had ever been with him; and he added: 'I hope we shall assist each other as long as we live,' and that, if I would remain with him till the month of May, he should be very much obliged to me, as I could be very useful to him. I answered that I intended it, and during that time wished to work as much as it was in my power for his service; and thus the conversation ended.

"On the 12th of May (1776), I took my leave of Sir Joshua Reynolds, to take my chance in the world, and we parted with great cordiality. He said I was perfectly in the right in my intentions, and that he had been fully satisfied with my conduct whilst I had been with him, also that he had no idea that I should have stayed with him so long. But now, added Sir Joshua, to succeed in the art, you are to remember that something more is to be

done than that which did formerly; Kneller, Lely, and Hudson will not do now. I was rather surprised to hear him join the former two names with that of Hudson, who was so evidently their inferior as to be out of all comparison. It was impossible to quit such a residence as Sir Joshua's without reluctance, a house in which I had spent so many happy hours; and although perfectly satisfied in my own mind that what I did in this respect was right, and that it was high time for me to be acting for myself on the stage of life, yet to leave that place, which was the constant resort of all the eminent in every valuable quality, without an inward regret, was not in my power. It is a melancholy reflection, even at this moment, when one considers the ravages a few short years have made in that unparalleled society which shone at his table, now all gone."

Sir Joshua appears here as "invulnerable" as ever; so absolutely proper is everything that is said and done on this occasion, so cordial and even kind is he, so full of good counsel. And yet all this and more one would give for the one touch of nature that moves us, when, for instance, we read Francesco Francia's simple entry in his diary, on parting from his trusty apprentice Timoteo Viti:—

"1495, *a dì* 4 *Aprile, è partito il mio caro Timoteo, che Dio li dia ogni bene e fortuna.*" *

The Academy records for December 1775 contain, it appears, note of a motion carried in the Council for removing from its lists the name of Gainsborough, he having declined to accept any office in the Academy, and

* "1495, the 4th of April, my dear Timoteo left me; may God grant him all good luck and fortune."

never attending. The general meeting administered, however, on this occasion, a rebuke to the Council, by restoring to it the name of Sir Joshua's rival.

Rancorous spite, envy of colleagues in the Academy, whose artistic and social success is greater than his own, innuendo and hardly-veiled insult, mark the series of self-denying resolutions introduced by Barry before the Council at this time, ostensibly to guard against favouritism in the hanging of pictures by artists within the academic body. The only one which there is any need to quote here is the first :—"That all pictures exceeding half-length should be hung above the line." Though Barry's impracticable resolutions were not then adopted, this one, or something not unlike it, subsequently imposed itself, and is law to the present day at Burlington House *—and a very foolish, shortsighted law, too, seeing that the aspect of many of the best full-lengths is hopelessly falsified by such a position as that to which they are of necessity relegated.

The Thrales' Streatham Gallery of notabilities was now fast approaching completion, although it was not to receive, until 1781, its crowning decoration — the portrait of Mrs Thrale herself, with her daughter "Queenie." It is about this time that Sir Joshua painted for it his own likeness, holding the ear-trumpet —a portrait differing in type from all others in the long list executed of himself. (Lent by Mrs Drummond to the Old Masters in 1877.) It is in connection with this particular picture, and with reference to the portrait painted in 1775 of Johnson holding a book close to his eyes, that the latter characteristically said to Mrs Thrale : "Reynolds

* It is only full-lengths, however, which are debarred from taking their place on the line.

may paint himself as deaf as he chooses, but I will not be Blinking Sam."

To the noble series is now added the last, and one of the very best, of the portraits of Garrick, painted when his unexampled career was coming to an end in a succession of cumulated triumphs, more splendid than have been enjoyed before or since by any English performer. Though he is now in his sixtieth year—his constitution undermined and about to fail altogether from a combination of ailments—the brilliant glance, as he appears facing the spectator, sitting easily at a table, upon which he lightly rests his crossed hands, is as wonderful in its vivacity as ever. Though the expression is one of repose, or rather expectancy, though the contours of the face are rounder and heavier than in the earlier portraits, the potentiality of facial expression is as great as ever; the effect of the eye is just what Dr Burney describes it to be, in speaking of the original: "Surely equal to all Argus's hundred."

Though the Streatham Gallery was even then not complete, it may be convenient to note shortly here of what it finally consisted.

The noted picture of Mrs Thrale and her daughter—the only full-length in the collection, all the others being half-lengths or three-quarters—was over the fireplace, but not completed until 1781. It is of this portrait that the lady herself, writing many years after, with her usual exuberance of humour, in reference to a passage in Northcote's *Life of Reynolds*—the one in which the biographer states that the beauty of his master's paintings is often more conspicuous than the accuracy of the likenesses—declares: "In my portrait, above *all*, there is, *no* resemblance, and the *character* is less like my father's daughter than Pharoah's!"

Mr Thrale's picture was over the door leading to his study, and on the walls Lord Sandys, Lord Westcote (Lyttleton)—both early friends of the liberal brewer—Johnson, Burke, Goldsmith, Murphy, Garrick, Baretti, Sir Robert Chambers, and Sir Joshua himself. There was room for one more frame when the acquaintance with Dr Burney began, and this was afterwards filled up by his portrait, completing the set.*

* When the collection was sold by auction in the spring of 1816, some forty years after this time, by Mrs Thrale-Piozzi, then an aged lady, but retaining all, and more than all, her former vigour and vivacity, the following prices were, according to her marked catalogue, obtained :—"Lord Sandys," £36, 15s. (bought by Lady Downshire); "Lord Lyttleton," £43, 1s. (his son, Mr Lyttleton); "Mrs Piozzi and her Daughter," £81, 18s. (bought by S. Boddington, Esq.—a rich merchant); "Goldsmith" (a replica of the Knole picture—£133, 7s.—bought by the Duke of Bedford); "Sir Joshua Reynolds," £128, 2s. (bought by R. Sharp, Esq., M.P.); "Sir Robert Chambers," £84 (bought by his widow); "David Garrick," £183, 15s. (bought by Dr Charles Burney); "Baretti," £31, 10s. (bought by a Mr Stewart); "Dr Burney," £84 (bought by his son, Dr Charles Burney); "Edmund Burke," £252 (bought by R. Sharp, Esq.); "Dr Johnson," £378 (Watson Taylor, Esq.—now at the National Gallery); "Arthur Murphy" (bought in by Mrs Piozzi for £102, 18s.).

It so happened that in 1780, while some of the Streatham portraits were still in progress, Sir Joshua raised his prices, and Mrs Thrale complains that, after Mr Thrale's death, she thus had, in more than one instance, to pay more for the pictures than they ultimately fetched. It has just been seen that this complaint is on the whole not well founded, seeing that some of the canvases fetched enormously enhanced prices.

CHAPTER VII

Dr Johnson reproved by Sir Joshua—Academy Dinner of 1776—Exhibition of 1776—Sir Joshua's Pictures—The Otaheitan Omiah—Sir Joshua's Portrait of Himself for Florence—Baretti again—The Blue Stockings—Comparison with French Prototypes—The Art of holding a *Salon*—Mrs Montagu's Prose—Walpole on the Blues—More Social Gaieties—Barry and the Society of Arts—Exhibition of 1877—Lady Caroline Montagu, in the Portrait called "Winter"—"A Fortune-Teller"—The Dilettanti Portrait-groups—Portraits of Sir William Hamilton—Great Portrait-group of the Marlborough Family—Its Defects—Miss Burney—First visit to Sir Joshua at Leicester Fields—Allan Ramsay—Boswell and Johnson—Exhibition of 1778—Gainsborough's Display—Seven Discourses published, with Dedication to the King—Malone—Eighth Discourse and Gainsborough's "Blue Boy"—Window of New College Chapel, Oxford—Its Component Parts.

ABOUT this time Johnson appears to have got it into his head that Reynolds indulged rather more in the fashionable vice of wine-bibbing than was good for him, and thought it necessary to take his friend to task on the delicate subject.

Reynolds had remarked in excuse of wine-drinking that "to please one's company (*i.e.*, by taking part in their pleasures) was a strong motive;" when Johnson—the water-drinker—finding no argument handy, blurts out: "I won't argue any more with you, sir; you are too far gone." Whereto Sir Joshua rejoins with dignity, "I should have thought so indeed, sir, had I made such a speech as you have now done." *Johnson* (drawing him-

self in, and, according to Boswell, actually blushing): "Nay, don't be angry, I did not mean to offend you."

It is significant that, on this occasion, even the unrivalled equanimity of Sir Joshua was not proof against the sledge-hammer brutalities of his friend, and that with a word he found means to recall him to good manners—or as near thereto as he was ever able to get. That Johnson, the gross and intemperate eater, the Brobdinagian swiller of innumerable cups of tea, should lay down rules of temperance for the most temperate and self-restrained of mortals, was evidently more than could be borne. As usual, the incorrigible doctor is pulled up at once by the recoil of the antagonist stung beyond endurance, and with a child-like expression of penitence at once disarms all resentment.

In the spring of this year, Sir Joshua made great use of his villa at Richmond for the purpose of entertaining parties of friends, whose intellectual and social distinction did not prevent their indulging in the good-natured merriment and give-and-take of unaffected conversation, which wits of an inferior order might have deemed beneath their dignity.

At the Academy dinner of 1776, for most of the invitations to which we may assume that Sir Joshua was, directly or indirectly, responsible, we find such names, representative of artistic supremacy—as distinguished from official or social position—as those of Garrick, Foote, and the greatest executant of this day, the violin-player Giardini. Sir Joshua's courage and loyalty, when his friends were concerned, was especially evidenced by the inclusion, on this particular occasion, of Foote among the invited guests, seeing that he was at that very moment under a dark cloud, in consequence of calumnious accusations of the foulest character, brought against him at the

instigation of the notorious Elizabeth Chudleigh, Duchess of Kingston—a return for his satire of her as "Lady Kitty Crocodile" in his comedy, *A Trip to Calais*. Altogether, the selection of guests, at this time when rank and official position counted for so much more than they do at the present time, showed a wider and more catholic view of the position and duties of the Royal Academy than that which obtains to-day, when the so-called patron of art—that is, the purchaser of high-priced pictures—occupies a position *sui generis*, for which there is no exact parallel in the artistic history of the last century.

Sir Joshua's contribution to the exhibition of 1776 was as follows:—

"Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire"—the Althorp full-length, in which she appears, *en grande toilette*, descending a flight of steps.

"Mrs Lloyd"—a full-length of the lady, in a white, semi-classic dress, with sandals, affectedly inscribing her name on the trunk of a tree The portrait is now in the possession of Lord Rothschild, and was No. 37 at the Old Masters in 1887.

"Lord Althorp" (full-length, in a black Vandyck dress, leaning on a pedestal, with a book in his right hand). This was George John Spencer, Viscount Althorp, afterwards Earl Spencer, born September 1st, 1758; brother of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire. The picture was No. 69 at the Reynolds Exhibition in 1884.

A half-length of "Lord Temple" (much praised by Walpole).

The portrait of Mrs Montagu—showing the Queen of the Blues seated in easy attitude, with a mien of reflection, wearing an elaborately-brocaded and festooned gown.

"Master Crewe as Henry VIII." (at Crewe Hall)—a delightful example of youthful exuberance and jollity,

in which Sir Joshua, aided by the naturalness of his model, has risen superior to the masquerading costume imposed for the occasion, and even makes use of it to give added character to his picture.

A three-quarter-length of the Duke of Devonshire (at Crewe Hall).

The Thrale portrait of Garrick above described—(now in the Lansdowne Collection).

"Master Herbert as Bacchus" (in Lord Carnarvon's collection at High Clere).

"The Infant St John"—a portrait of Master Wynn, who sits in orthodox fashion, with a lamb by his side, holding a cup into which water flows from a rock. The picture was No. 18 at the Reynolds Exhibition.

"The Infant Daniel."—This would appear to be identical with the picture since known as "The Infant Samuel," under which title it has become universally popular. The original "Samuel" is, or was, at Knole; a replica was bequeathed by Lord Farnborough to the National Gallery in 1838; a duplicate is at the Dulwich Gallery. This is not to be confounded with a much finer picture, the "Calling of Samuel," painted about 1782, and now the property of the Earl of Darnley, by whom it was, in 1884, lent to the Reynolds Exhibition.

The full-length of "Omiah," now at Castle Howard.

This was the amiable Otaheitan Omiah, who had been brought over by Captain Furneaux in the *Adventure*, and at once became the plaything of the frivolous, pleasure-loving society of the time, delighted with the gentle manners and natural good breeding of a "noble savage" who might well have been taken as the living proof of Rousseau's favourite theory of the natural goodness of man; as a typical example, in its more primitive phase, of *l'humanité vertueuse et sensible.*

If not exactly the conventional manners of the Court and society, at any rate innate good manners of his own carried Omiah through all difficulties, and caused his courteous ways to be admired in all the novel and trying positions in which the enthusiasm of the polite world placed him. We hear of his appearance at Streatham, where he even captivated the censorious Johnson—as critical of bad manners in others as he was uncritical in this matter towards himself. We read of his playing at chess and backgammon with Baretti, and beating him, whereat the fiery Italian lost his temper, as he generally managed to do; Mrs Thrale remarking hereupon that everybody "admired the savage's good breeding, and the European's impatient spirit."

Sir Joshua chose for the Otaheitan's dress, not the too scanty one of his own island home, but a white robe and turban—a kind of fancy dress, which was at any rate better, as being more suggestive of an exotic nationality, than the hybrid suits in which he was generally made to figure in English society.

To this year, or thereabouts, would appear to belong the "Mercury" or "Mercury as Postman," and "Cupid as Link-boy," perhaps the most admirable examples of humorous characterisation, tempering and transfiguring realism, that the master has given us. The same delightfully audacious and insouciant young street-arab has posed in both cases, and in the one instance looks as untrustworthy yet fascinating a postman as in the other he stands forth an impudent and misleading cupid of the pavement. What gives a peculiar attractiveness to these pieces is, that the roguishness is so real and unforced, so entirely devoid of that simpering self-consciousness which has already so often been remarked upon as marring some of Sir Joshua's prettiest performances in this style.

Cupid as a Link-Boy

It was in this year that our master, having been admitted a member of the Florentine Academy, sent his portrait to be hung in the Grand Ducal Gallery, housed at the Uffizi. This is the well-known picture still to be seen there—in company a good deal more mixed than that in which it found itself at the time of its entrance into the conclave of the immortals. In it we are told by the biographers, that the President appears in the cap and crimson robes of an Oxford Doctor of Laws, standing by a bust of Michelangelo—one hand on his hip, the other holding the roll of his lectures and resting on the pedestal of the bust. The bust of Michelangelo is, however, in the Florentine example, rather like the Spanish Armada in the "Critic"—it is not in sight. Moreover, the only hand visible in the picture is that holding the roll of lectures.* The portrait holds its own bravely amid its surroundings, good, bad, and indifferent, in the Painters' Gallery, and emphatically shows the hand of a master of portraiture, not unworthy to come after the giants of Italian and Netherlandish art. Yet it does not reveal the true Sir Joshua, but brings forward only a Reynolds *de parade*, decked with his finest feathers, and bent on impressing with a sense of splendour and conventional dignity his colleagues of the Florentine Academy. The biographers give, from the Reynolds MSS., an elaborate and courteous communication from Sir Joshua to Signor Pelli, the head of the Academy, embodying in choice Italian his thanks to the Grand Duke and the Academy for the honour done him. The document in question they hold to be entirely of his own composition, and, if this were so, it would prove an altogether unusual proficiency on his part in the formal phraseology of the language. Yet while his private

* There has evidently been a confusion here.

notes on the technique of painting, written for the most part spontaneously in Italian, show him to have retained considerable familiarity with the language which he had acquired during the plastic period of early manhood, one cannot help suspecting in this flowery prose, though it may fall short here and there, the guiding hand of Baretti. Moreover, the single Latin quotation is so appropriate as to suggest Johnson, or some more finished scholar than the President, among the members of The Club. This hypothesis is rendered the more probable, seeing that Baretti was now translating into Italian, for publication in Italy, the six first Discourses of the President, a literary job for which he obtained twenty-five guineas.

The Italian professor's residence with the Thrales at Streatham, as the instructor of their eldest daughter, came to an abrupt termination this year.

Baretti had always behaved with studied insolence to Mrs Thrale in her own house, his constant effort being to assert independence, and to establish a sort of *imperium in imperio*. Now, smarting under an accumulation of fancied injuries, which had lashed him into a state of fury, he left the pleasant villa on foot one morning, never to return. It was, however, a good many years later, after the death of Dr Johnson and the publication of Mrs Piozzi's *Anecdotes*, that the smouldering enmity between the lady and the professor burst into open flame, and afforded so much amusement to an eager public.

Richard Wilson succeeded this year to the librarianship of the Royal Academy, on the death of Hayman, the boon companion of Hogarth and master of Gainsborough, and the small emoluments of the post must have been a great help to the impecunious master.

It was at the distribution of prizes, on the 10th

of December of this year, that Sir Joshua delivered his Seventh Discourse.

In these last years the Blue Stockings were at their height, and in 1777 we find Sir Joshua a constant guest at the houses of Mrs Montagu, Mrs Vesey, Mrs Ord, Mrs Walsingham, Mrs Cholmondeley, and Mrs Boscawen—to say nothing of Mrs Thrale, who, as a suburban hostess, stood upon a somewhat different footing from her sisters.

On looking back at this circle of highly moral, estimable, and, for the time in which they lived, unusually cultivated ladies, the general impression is one of surprise: not alone that they should have taken themselves so seriously, that they should have exhibited, with so exquisite a *naïveté* and self-satisfaction, their conviction of the importance attaching to the part played by them in society and in life, but that they should, with some few exceptions, have been accepted on their own terms by the group of men of altogether exceptional genius and brilliancy with whom they consorted; that they should have continued to shine, and to cause luminaries, great and small, to revolve round them, until death, old age and natural disintegration at last dissolved the circle.

For, in truth, among the incomparable charms, the indubitable accomplishments of the Englishwoman, there never has been, one is almost tempted to say, there never can be counted that finest of fine arts—*l'art de tenir un salon.* For this her self-consciousness is too great, her tact too small, her desire to shine in her own person too irrepressible. The chief effort of the Blues was not so much to place in the best possible setting the bright stars of art, politics, and literature with whom they lit up their routs and assemblies, as themselves to shine forth the central suns of these entertainments; they must of necessity *paraître*,

pour briller—briller pour paraître. It was Mrs Montagu's prose, Mrs Montagu's conversation, Mrs Montagu's patronising approval of Shakespeare, that occupied and interested Mrs Montagu more than anything else in the brilliant circle with which, by sheer force of character. ability, and pluck, rather than by any real wit or charm, she had managed to surround herself. The circle—at any rate, the female section of it—would apparently place on the same level, would discuss as seriously, praise as enthusiastically, Miss Hannah More's washy poetry, Mrs Chapone's moral essays, Mrs Carter's scholastic exercises, as the most enduring work by any great writer of them all.

And here is one among many radical differences between the Blues and the French prototypes whom they strove to imitate, and thought they rivalled. Even Philaminte herself, the superb *bourgeoise* of Molière's comedy, even Bélise and Armande, would expend their ecstacies on the bad sonnets of a Trissotin, or the false learning of a Vadius, rather than on the elegant effusions in which, in their own lost moments, they indulged.

The Hôtel de Rambouillet with which, even more appropriately than with the much later *salons* of a Madame du Deffand, a Mlle. de l'Espinasse, a Madame Geoffrin, the Blue Stockings might be paralleled, had, on the whole, notwithstanding its ridiculous side, a purifying influence on the literature and the manners of its contemporaries. And it may be again recalled that what Molière ridiculed, in such fashion as to immortalise the thing ridiculed, was not so much the circle of the Marquise de Rambouillet itself, which was, in his day—even when the *Précieuses Ridicules* was produced—long past its prime, but the ridiculous exaggerations of its ultra-refinements practised by the Parisian citizenesses—a Cathos, a Madelon, a Philaminte, a Bélise an Armande.

If the euphuists of the exclusive circle gave undue encouragement to such second-rate men of letters as a Voiture, a Chapelain, a Racan, they could also understand and back up Corneille's "Cid," notwithstanding the frowns of a Richelieu, and could bring the great Cardinal, in matters of taste, to recognise their unwritten laws. True, the queen of the circle was the *incomparable Arthénice*, and the arbitress of all the elegancies, but she was also, in her spare moments, Catherine de Vivonne, Marquise de Rambouillet, a very great, and a very sensible lady. True, the famous *Guirlande de Julie*, collected by the Duc de Montausier for the divine Julie d'Angennes de Rambouillet, afterwards his wife, contained, in its superb setting, madrigals as bad as anything the Blues themselves can have produced. But then, the Duchesse de Montausier, upon whom the sceptre of her "incomparable" mother had descended, managed, besides exercising undisputed sway over the mannerists of her circle, to fill a noble career, and to show a rare example of constancy and tenderness in the family relations of life.

Whatever may have been the merits or demerits of Madame du Deffand, we may be sure that, loudly as she might proclaim herself *ennuyée* with existence, she was never *ennuyeuse*—being too clear-sighted, indeed, to take either herself or the world absolutely *au sérieux*. We may be sure that Mlle. de l'Espinasse did not secure the friendship of D'Alembert, and collect in her modest apartments the cream of literary society, to overwhelm her subjects with tall talk and unrestfulness. We know that the *grande bourgeoise*, Madame Geoffrin, did not acquire her reputation for supreme good sense and discernment in matters of taste by making of her salon such a "Chaos" as poor Mrs Vesey delighted in; such a one as Horace Walpole describes, when he says that Mrs Vesey collects

"all the graduates and candidates for fame, where they vie with one another till they are as unintelligible as the good folks at Babel."

How different, too, is this sort of thing from the exquisite yet indefinable art with which Madame Récamier in the next century wove into her toils, and kept together at the Abbaye aux Bois, by the magic of her presence, and by a tact so unerring that it was almost genius, such men as Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Tocqueville, Ste. Beuve, Villemain Mérimée, Talma! We do not hear that she read to them anything of her composition, or imposed her opinions, or set up "altar for altar" in rivalry with any of the great personages upon whom she rained down influence. But we do hear that she possessed to perfection the art of arranging the chairs in her salon, "so as to separate the Empire from legitimism, the liberals from the ultras, the classic school from the romantic, by little moveable passages, extraordinarily convenient under certain circumstances."

Compare this with Hannah More's account of a small dinner-party at Mrs Montagu's, consisting of the hostess, the classic Mrs Carter, Dr Johnson, the naturalist Solander, Maty (one of the secretaries of the Royal Society), Mrs Boscawen, Miss Reynolds, and Sir Joshua, "the idol of every company"—together with "some other persons of higher rank and less wit." The party is well summed up, notwithstanding the enthusiastic comments of the young provincial lady, by Mrs Boscawen's expression of regret "that so many suns could not possibly shine at one time." But here would be just the opportunity for the lady with the genius of the salon, bent on making her bright luminaries shine, instead of producing her own paler light. Such a one would seek to conciliate opposing influences, and would manage to make her illustrious guests exhibit

themselves to their best advantage. Mrs Montagu on this occasion promises her new Blue a smaller party soon, at which "from fewer luminaries there may emanate a clearer, steadier, and more beneficial light."

The surprising seriousness with which this strenuous and admirable lady took her own utterances, and the diluted quality of these, may be pretty well understood, too, from the following passage in a letter to the virtuous Dr Beattie. She writes, with regard to the allegorical portrait of her correspondent, by Reynolds, already described :—

"I am delighted with Sir Joshua's plan, and do not doubt he will make a very noble picture of it. I class Sir Joshua with the greatest geniuses that have ever appeared in the art of painting, and I wish he was employed by the public in some great work that would do honour to our country in future ages. He has the spirit of a Grecian artist. The Athenians did not employ such men in painting portraits to place over a chimney or the door of a private cabinet. I long to see the picture he is now designing—virtue and truth are subjects worthy of the artist and the man. He has a most excellent moral character, and is most pleasant and amiable in society, and, with great talents, has uncommon humility and gentleness."

If much of the talk, as well as the written prose, of the Blues was of this quality—and there is every reason to believe that it was chiefly formed on the Johnsonian model, though not relieved by the Doctor's thunderbolts, or his common sense flavoured with paradox—with what relief must Sir Joshua and his friends have turned to The Club and their other similar haunts, and with what delight to Sir Joshua's own hospitable, informal feasts, where, if anywhere, conversation had its elbows on the table!

In this respect the hospitalities presided over by Mrs Thrale at Streatham must have compared favourably with those of her more fashionable and ultra-Blue sisters. From most of their follies and absurdities the very genuine humour, the keen sense of the ridiculous, with which the vivacious lady was gifted, saved her. Indeed, hers is a personality that, with all its faults—so severely dissected under the clear, dry light of latter-day criticism —must stand well apart from that of any of the well-meaning ladies to whom reference has just now been made.

It was Horace Walpole again who, while maintaining a sort of semi-detached relation with all the ladies of the set, and with some of them a genuine friendship, took the humorous view of the *Précieuses*, whom so many of their contemporaries, well qualified to judge better, elected —following the ladies themselves—to treat seriously. He was guided here, as in his view of life generally, by his critical and constitutionally negative temperament, but it cannot be denied that his estimate, as a contemporary standing a little aside, is much the one which those who now look back from a distance find themselves adopting.

In 1775 he writes of that *muse de province*, Lady (then Mrs) Miller, of Bath celebrity :—

"Alas! Mrs Miller is returned a beauty, a genius, a Sappho, a tenth Muse, as romantic as Mlle. Scudéri, and as sophisticated as Mrs Vesey."

It is not, however, until a little later on (in 1781), that we find his most piquant accounts of "Mrs Montagu and her Mænades," of "Ashtaroth and Dagon," *à propos* of the famous quarrel with Dr Johnson on the subject of the lady's favourite poet, Lord Lyttleton.

It is not a little touching, under the circumstances, to find the critic of the Blue Stockings consoling with his friendship the last years of poor, broken-down, dispirited Mrs Vesey, whose pretensions to *belles lettres* and social leadership he had so agreeably derided.

On this last point, although entirely out of its chronological order, it appears convenient to quote a touching passage from a letter addressed by Hannah More, in 1787, to Walpole himself:—

"Mr Walpole," she says, "seldomer presents himself to my mind as the man of wit than as the tender-hearted and humane friend of my dear, infirm, broken-spirited Mrs Vesey. One only *admires* talents, and admiration is a cold sentiment, with which affection has commonly nothing to do; but one does more than admire them when they are devoted to such gentle purposes. My very heart is softened when I consider that she is now out of the way of your kind attentions, and I fear that nothing else on earth gives her the smallest pleasure."

Sir Joshua's excursions into the world of fashion are, however, by no means confined to the gatherings of the Blues. He frequents regularly the houses of his friends in the great world, beginning with those of the Dukes of Marlborough and Bedford, and is even found gracing with his presence one of the balls of the Ladies' Club, which had been started by the most mundane and least blue leaders of fashion pure and simple; most of them, as may be readily imagined, numbered among the master's own sitters. Among these divinities of the hour are the fair Duchesses of Devonshire and Rutland —rivals in beauty and elegance; the Countess of Derby, the Countess of Jersey, Lady Craven, and Mrs Crewe.

The failure of the attempt made in 1774 by the

Society of Arts to arrange with the Royal Academy for the decoration of their great room in the Adelphi with a continuous scheme of decoration, combining historical and allegorical designs, has already been referred to. Barry, partly inspired by his genuine worship for what he deemed the ideal in art, partly, no doubt, bent on reading the Academy a lesson, after their rejection of his self-denying resolutions, at this stage offered to undertake, single-handed, the gigantic task which their combined forces had been unable or unwilling to assume. He declared himself prepared to execute with his own hand the whole of the proposed decorations, upon a much larger and more comprehensive plan, and without payment—the Society to find him in canvas, colours, and models. The painter stated his intention to be "to carry the painting uninterruptedly round the room (as has been done in the great rooms at the Vatican and Farnese galleries), by which the expense of frames will be saved to the Society." The quixotically generous offer was accepted, and in July 1777 he set to work. It will be time enough to speak of the pictures themselves when we come to the year 1783, in which they were finished.

It is impossible, however repellent the personality of the man may appear, to think coldly or without admiration of Barry thus setting to work, without definite prospect of ultimate reward, with only sixteen shillings in his pocket, and by Spartan training so minimising his wants that, during the seven years which, instead of the two originally allotted to the task, he took to perform it, he was able to live chiefly on bread and apples—or, as some say, on oatmeal porridge—being often compelled, in order to make sure even of this bare sustenance, to work at night for the printsellers. "I thought myself bound," he says, with reference to his

proposition to the Society of Arts,—"in duty to the country, to art, and to my own character, to try whether my abilities would enable me to exhibit the proof as well as the argument." While feeling respect for Barry's endurance, his optimism, his belief *quand même* in his own powers, it is not necessary to throw mud at Sir Joshua—an enemy whom he had made for himself through wanton aggression and misrepresentation—because the latter did not interrupt a career of unexampled and well-merited success in portraiture, to enter upon his share of a task which, for all the theoretical advocacy of high art in his Discourses, he may well have deemed to be beyond his powers.

The exhibition of the Royal Academy in this year, 1777, opens on the 24th of April, and includes 423 works.

Among these, the most attractive performances are portraits of the Duke and Duchess of Cumberland, Lord Gage, and "Abel playing on the *viol di gamba*," by Gainsborough; besides a large landscape from the same hand, which Walpole eulogistically, but somewhat vaguely, characterises as "by far the finest landscape ever painted in England, and equal to the great masters."

John Singleton Copley, now an associate, sends portraits and a "Nativity." Benjamin West, newly dignified with the expressly-coined title "Historical Painter to His Majesty," contributes, besides portraits of the Queen and Princess Royal, and of the royal children—no doubt the pictures now at Hampton Court—a "Michael subduing Satan," for Trinity College, Cambridge, and a "Lazarus," for Winchester Cathedral. Wilson sends a "Tivoli," and "The Lake of Nemi."

Sir Joshua, becoming more and more copious as time advances, comes forward with no less than thirteen pictures:—

Full-length pictures of Lady Frances Marsham, the Countess of Derby, and Lady Bamfylde.

A "Portrait of a Nobleman with his Brothers and a Young Lady."

The last is the portrait-group of Francis, Duke of Bedford, Lord John and Lord William Russell, with their cousin Miss Vernon; the young Duke being St George vanquishing a property dragon, and Miss Vernon the rescued Princess. This is, it must be owned, one of the master's most conspicuous failures, and betrays more clearly than almost any other picture from his brush his limitations where dramatic action, as apart from dramatic characterisation, is to be expressed. Even in his most conspicuous high art failures he has managed to show more energy, more cohesion, than here, where he appears, as only on the rarest occasions, almost ridiculous.

Walpole's criticism on this unfortunate performance is both concise and exact. "I have seen," he says, "the picture of 'St George,' and approve the Duke of Bedford's head, and the exact likeness of Miss Vernon, but the attitude is mean and foolish, and expresses only silly wonderment."

Next we have "Lady Caroline Montagu, daughter of Charles, the fourth Duke of Buccleugh, in the Snow" (engraved as "Winter"). This is one of Sir Joshua's masterpieces among the portraits of children, coming in its inimitable *naïveté* and charm well within the line of demarcation which divides his performances of this kind into two classes.

Horace Walpole must again be quoted here, since he is not only just in criticism but hearty and sympathetic, as he will not always allow himself to be.

"Best of all—delicious—is a picture of a little girl of the Duke of Buccleugh, who is overlaid with a long cloak, bonnet, and muff, in the midst of the snow, and is perishing, blue and red, with cold, but looks so smiling and good-

humoured that one longs to catch her up in one's arms, and kiss her till she is in a sweat and squalls." How natural and how naturally expressed the desire, but, at the same time, how characteristic in its selfishness of the bachelor dilettante!

Next in the catalogue—the brackets are Leslie and Taylor's—come:—"A Lady," half-length; "A Clergyman," three-quarters (Dr Warton or Dr Leyland); "A Lady and Child" (Lady Elizabeth Herbert and her son at High Clere?); "A Gentleman" (Mr Gawler?); "A Child asleep" (the Cupid at High Clere?); "A Fortune-Teller;" "A Young Nobleman;" "A Boy reading."

The "Fortune-Teller" represents two of the Marlborough children, Lady Charlotte and Lord Henry Spencer. She, dressed as a gipsy, is the fortune-teller, and reads the hand of her young brother, dressed in a Vandyck dress—the favourite wear of the time for youths and boys.

Here again is a canvas, which, distinguished as it is, even in its present injured state, for melting charm of colour and singular ease and vivacity of execution, must go into the category of the falsely naïve, of the much too arch and self-conscious to be true; while the "Lady Caroline Montagu" stands a strong example on the other side.

Did Sir Joshua take the more realistic and the incomparably more pathetic view of English children to please himself, and the more sentimental, the more self-conscious view to please an age in which a vein of sensibility, and often false sensibility, ran through even the healthiest art and the healthiest literature? Not so strongly was this perceptible, however, with ourselves, as on the other side of the Channel, where the false sentiment which was deemed, during the latter half of the century, a finish to good manners and high breeding, found its fitting expression in the false morality,

the false ingenuousness, the vicious suggestiveness of a Greuze.

The "Fortune-Teller," on the dispersion of the Blenheim pictures, passed into the possession of Sir Charles Tennant, and was by him lent to the Old Masters at Burlington House in 1891, under the title "The Young Fortune-Tellers."

The Marlborough picture is not to be confounded with another canvas, the so-called "Gipsy Fortune-Teller" (at Knole), which has been engraved by J. K. Sherwin. Here we have a girl half-reclining in her lover's arms while her fortune is being told by a comely gipsy-girl. Where all else is mannered—especially the masquerading gipsy, and the insipid lover wearing an improbable plumed hat—the face and figure of the girl herself, laughing hysterically in her effort to disguise a certain uneasiness, are observed with so subtle a truth, with so happy a realisation of a shade of expression almost *inédit*, as to be practically unique in the art of Reynolds.

It was at this period that the two great companion pictures of the members of the Dilettanti Society were commenced. It has been seen that Reynolds accepted the office of painter to the Society in 1769, in succession to Athenian Stuart, himself the successor of Knapton. It was the rule that each member should present his portrait in oils, executed by the painter-in-ordinary, to the Society, or pay a commutation of one guinea a year for "face-money." A whole series of fairly well characterised and, in some instances, even humorous portraits by Knapton remain to prove that this usage was very generally observed.

A number of members, desiring to vary the monotony of the single portraits, and to fulfil their obligation to the Society as little disagreeably as might be, resolved to sit to its painter "either separately or in a group the size

to be at the option of Sir Joshua." Thus were the two famous canvases, which are among the master's most remarkable and exceptional works, originated. Though the different members included in the two groups commenced their sittings in the early part of this year, the pictures were not completed until 1779, and it was March 1780 before they were placed in the Society's rooms.

Though Sir Joshua's task was here similar, on a smaller scale, to that of Frans Hals and Van der Helst, in their great canvases at Haarlem and Amsterdam respectively, to that of Rembrandt in the so-called "Syndics" of Amsterdam, to that of Rubens in his "Four Philosophers" at the Pitti, his added difficulty was that he was bound, above all, to suggest in his portraits, both the good taste and the good fellowship which were the *raison-d'être* of the Society; to give discreetly the note of fashionable connoisseurship and dilettantism, and with it the stronger, if less ostensible, bond of conviviality. He could not on such an occasion emulate the boisterous energy, the *joie de vivre* of Hals, the serious, realistic characterisation of Van der Helst, the solemn pathos of Rembrandt; or take refuge in the unreal posturing and false naturalness in which he himself sometimes indulged in family portrait-pieces.

He appears to have aimed, in the present instance, above all, at a semi-decorative, semi-realistic portraiture of subdued splendour, which should avoid the conventionality of the avowed *portrait d'apparat*, yet should not attempt the concentrated individuality of characterisation of which he had, on occasion, shown himself so exceptionally capable. If this was indeed his aim, as we may well assume it to have been, he perfectly achieved it in these two sumptuous performances, which, considering the vicissitudes through which they have

passed, have well preserved a silvery, yet, in its depths, glowing splendour, suggestive of Paolo Veronese and Tintoretto rather than the hotter chiaroscuro of Rembrandt, towards which, in his own fashion, and with his own modifications, Reynolds so much inclined.

The one group of portraits includes Sir William Watkin Wynn, with one hand extended, the other on a book; Sir John Taylor standing behind, holding a glass in his right hand, a handkerchief in his left; Mr (afterwards Sir William) Payne-Gallwey drinking from a wine-glass. Sir William Hamilton, a genuine dilettante, and even archæologist, to whose taste the magnificent collection of Greek and Campanian vases, sold by him in 1772 to the Trustees of the British Museum, bore witness—but who will always be best, if not most favourably, known as the husband of Nelson's and Romney's Lady Hamilton, is seated at a table in the centre of the composition; Mr Richard Thompson appears standing behind, holding up a wine-glass; Mr W. Spencer-Stanhope is seen in profile, talking to Mr Smyth of Heath.

In the companion picture we see Lord Mulgrave pointing over his shoulder; Mr (afterwards Lord) Dundas standing up, with a gem between his fingers, which he holds against the light; the Earl of Seaforth seated at the table; the Hon. Charles Greville in the middle, behind; Charles Crowle, a well-known antiquary, next to the last named; Francis Godolphin, fifth Duke of Leeds, sitting at the table, holding a gem in the one hand and a stick in the other; and Joseph (afterwards Sir Joseph) Banks, the brilliant navigator and naturalist, to whom detailed reference has already been made, unobtrusively presented in profile.

The Dilettanti portraits were Nos. 21 and 32 at the Reynolds Exhibition of the Grosvenor Gallery, and have,

until recently, been seen to highest advantage on the walls of the great entrance hall or staircase at the National Gallery. Now, together with the portrait of Sir Joshua by himself, painted as a present to the Society on his being elected a member, they have been removed to a banqueting chamber which forms part of the private apartments belonging to the new Grafton Galleries, whither the Dilettanti have elected to migrate with their household gods.

The pictures, though fairly well seen by night, are now by day practically invisible, and the change, although, perhaps, under the circumstances, inevitable, is in result a most unfortunate one.

A portrait of Sir William Hamilton, bearing a general resemblance to that in the Dilettanti group, is now the property of Sir William R. Anson, and was by him contributed to the Old Masters Exhibition in 1788. This is the picture of which it is told that Sir Joshua, hearing from Miss Hamilton that her uncle had presented it to her, desired that she should send it to him, "*and he would renovate it with lasting colours.*" This was done, and in February 1785 Miss Hamilton saw the portrait in the master's studio, and described it as "retouched and made a very beautiful picture indeed." This little incident is of great importance in reference to the important question, which will be shortly dealt with hereafter, of Sir Joshua's technique in his earlier and later periods. It shows pretty clearly that he was as keenly alive to his deficiencies in this respect as were his critics and the art-loving world of his time. It confirms, too, what the pictures themselves prove, that, on the whole, the later and more splendid productions of his maturity have stood the test of time with less disastrous results than the pictures of his earlier, and especially of his middle career.

A better known and more important portrait, by Sir Joshua, of the British Ambassador to the Two Sicilies is the full-length in which he appears seated, holding on his knee one of D'Hancarville's four portly volumes on his Greek vases, a number of the original examples themselves, very finely rendered, encumbering both floor and table.* The expression and attitude are here tinged with hauteur and not a little characteristic of the true Dilettante.

This year Sir Joshua was living in sustained intimacy with Burke and his circle, both in London and at his country seat at Beaconsfield, and in the summer months was much with the Garricks at their Hampton retreat.

When we read how Hannah More's tragedy, *Percy*, in which she had been more or less coached by Garrick, was accepted for Covent Garden, and thereupon furnished with a prologue and epilogue from the facile pen of the great comedian; when we find this acceptance followed by a great success on the stage, where such a practised man of letters as Walpole's friend Mason could only command a bare *succès d'estime* for his "Caractacus," we may a little moderate our surprise at the extraordinary vogue attained, a little later, by a work of genuine novelty and charm like Miss Burney's "Evelina."

In August of this year, Sir Joshua goes to Blenheim, there to complete the great group of the Marlborough Family, for which the Duke and Duchess, with Lord Henry, Lady Elizabeth, and Lady Caroline Spencer had been giving frequent sittings in London. The great canvas, which is one of the few treasures of the famous Blenheim Collection still remaining in Vanbrugh's palace, shows, as its central feature, the Duchess, standing erect with her hand on the arm of the Duke, who, in his peer's robes, sits, clasping with one arm Lord Blandford, while

* Engraved by H. Hudson in 1787.

in front of his consort and at her left side appear, woven into one group, Lord Henry Spencer, the hero of the "Young Fortune-Teller," and his sisters, Lady Caroline, Lady Elizabeth, Lady Charlotte (the little Gipsy in the "Fortune-Teller"), and Lady Anne.

There is always an anecdote in connection with Sir Joshua's works of this type, and in the present instance we are told that when Lady Anne, a child of four, was brought into the room to sit, she drew back, clinging to her nurse, and crying out, "I won't be painted." Sir Joshua kept the natural attitude, but, in order to account for it in the picture, employed the rather forced expedient of putting into the hands of little Lady Charlotte a gigantic classic mask. The *abandon* and playfulness of this incident, breaking in upon the ceremonial pomp of the great full-dress portrait-group, has been much admired.

The figures which go to make up the ensemble of the vast canvas are, without question, individually admirable, and the colour is rich and appropriate, even though it may not reach Sir Joshua's high-water mark; the pompous framing to the personages, made up of baroque twisted column, classic arch, looped curtain, and a Græco-Roman presentment of the Great Duke carrying, like Augustus, Victory on his palm, is in its very conventionality appropriate enough.

Yet has not the master fallen between two stools, in endeavouring to combine the measured stateliness held to befit the portrait-group of a great family with a naturalness, a momentariness, such as can only, under the circumstances, appear forced and unnatural, and must thus be disturbing to the repose and dignity of the whole?

He may have here had in view a combination of the more intimate and untrammelled family portraiture of the Dutch (as exemplified by Frans Hals and Rembrandt)

with the ceremonial form of presentment which found favour in Italian, French, and, more or less also, in Flemish art. Van Dyck himself failed to give cohesion and dramatic *vraisemblance*, in addition to grace of line, to the famous group of the Pembroke Family at Wilton House the prototype, no doubt, of all the English pieces of this class; the main motives of this vast canvas being too transparently factitious. Succeeding sometimes admirably in juxtaposing two figures—as in the two distinct versions of the "Lord John and Lord Bernard Stuart"—Sir Anthony fails when he has to combine a greater number, or else takes refuge in the artless simplicity of arrangement which marks, for instance, his numerous versions of the "Children of Charles I." He shows himself in this special phase of portraiture, to a marked degree, less inventive than were his master Rubens and the Venetians from whom he derived inspiration; and infinitely less various than Reynolds himself.

The English master has sought his own way out of the difficulty of uniformity and consequent monotony; and if he has not achieved complete success, or succeeded in convincing the beholder either, on the one side, of the dignity, or, on the other, of the naturalness of his picture, he has at any rate failed in august company.

Since it would have been manifestly impossible, in the latter half of the eighteenth century, to do as Rubens did in his great family piece in the Church of St Jacques at Antwerp, in which he represented himself, his two wives, and his family in adoration before the Virgin and Child—a mode of treatment derived by him from Titian, Veronese, and the Venetians of the sixteenth century—a way out of the difficulty would have been to show the Marlborough family, in various phases of contemplation, before the statue of their illustrious ancestor and founder.

This would certainly have been a somewhat conventional, it might be said an affected, motive; yet, all the same, one sufficiently real for the time, and strong enough to give the great canvas just that cohesion which it lacks. An arrangement much of this kind has enabled a French artist, of by no means the first rank—Jean Dumont, called *le Romain*—to create a powerful and sufficiently convincing effect in a great portrait-piece of similar motive and dimensions. This work, now in the Louvre, shows Madame Mercier, the nurse of Louis XV., holding a painting of her royal foster-child, and surrounded by a numerous progeny of sons and daughters, their wives and husbands. All of them are in more or less attentive and respectful contemplation of the symbolic portrait, and they are thus kept together by an invisible, but none the less real, bond of union.

It was in the spring of 1777 that Sir Joshua lost his favourite drapery-man, Toms, who, even after he became a full-fledged R.A., continued to live chiefly by that lower branch of his profession in which he had acquired so practised a facility. Toms had become a drunkard, probably under the stress of poverty and disappointment, and he put an end to his own life.

To Northcote the reader must be referred for some account of occasional squabbles between Sir Joshua and this his favourite assistant. So far from producing a repellent effect, these spots on the sun of his immaculateness serve to enliven the picture by breaking the uniformity of its tone. We happily get, for once, a little away from that too famous equanimity of the master; for indeed his character, from whatever aspect we look at it, requires little, or not at all, the artificial rounding off, the reducing into a too consistent whole, which is still overmuch deemed a necessity of literary portraiture.

It is in 1778 that Miss Burney first appears on the scene, blazing into an instant celebrity, which she maintains but never exceeds, with *Evelina*. It is hardly necessary to tell again the thrice-told tale of her sudden rise, of her universal acceptance, and the unmeasured adulation with which she was greeted by Burke, by Dictator Johnson himself, by Sheridan, by Sir Joshua, to say nothing of the flattering Blues and literary *élégantes*, the one more anxious to affirm, by unbounded enthusiasm, her own good taste than the other. Still, the view taken by Miss Burney of Sir Joshua's character, the apt instances given by her of his blandness and unaffected amiability, are such an important contribution towards the formation of a true estimate of him, from the human side, that a return to the subject seems inevitable. The youthful novelist had, beyond most of her contemporaries, except Mrs Thrale, the intuitive gift of observation and the power of justly interpreting character. She had, too, at that early period of her life, the charm of unaffected and singularly pertinent expression, which she afterwards lost.

It was Mrs Thrale who first captured the new star, and served her up at a Streatham dinner-party to Sir Joshua, who having, according to the statement of his nieces, confirmed by the more serious authority of Miss Reynolds, sat up all night to finish *Evelina*, had been heard to declare that he would give fifty pounds to know the author. This is the beginning of a friendship most kindly and even, for Sir Joshua, warmly sustained until the end, with a certain respect and deferential admiration, rather than protection, on the part of the senior, for the young and brilliant writer. Mrs Montagu, in connection with whose awe-inspiring name one hardly ventures to pronounce the word busybody, had gone near to withering it at the

outset, by actually proposing to make a match between Evelina and the mature President.

It was in December 1778 that the acquaintance, so auspiciously begun at Streatham between the President and the much-fêted, yet still unaffectedly modest, Fanny, was followed up by that first visit to Leicester Fields, so vividly and humorously described in her *Memoirs*. It may be deemed that the passage has already been sufficiently quoted and re-quoted; yet it shows Sir Joshua so naturally and sympathetically in his own proper surroundings, and gives such happy peeps at the set when not exactly in representation; it hits off so admirably that most vivacious, if not most refined, of the Blues, Mrs Cholmondeley (Peg Woffington's sister), that it is impossible to resist the temptation of quoting some portion of it yet once again:—

"We found the Miss Palmers alone. We were for near an hour quite easy, chatty and comfortable; no pointed speech was made, and no starer entered.

"Mrs and Miss Horneck were announced. Mrs Horneck seated herself by my mother. Miss Palmer introduced me to her and her daughter, who seated herself next me; but not one word passed between us!

"Mrs Horneck, as I found in the course of the evening, is an exceeding sensible, well-bred woman. Her daughter is very beautiful, but was low-spirited and silent during the whole visit. She was indeed very unhappy, as Miss Palmer informed me, upon account of some ill news she had lately heard of the affairs of a gentleman (Colonel Gwynn) to whom she is to be shortly married.

"Next came a Mr Gwatkin, of whom I have nothing to say, but that he was very talkative with Miss Offy Palmer, and very silent with everybody else.

"Not long after came a whole troop, consisting of Mr Cholmondeley, Miss Cholmondeley and Miss Fanny Cholmondeley, his daughters, and Miss Forrest. Mrs Cholmondeley, I found, was engaged elsewhere, but soon expected.

"Now here was a trick of Sir Joshua, to make me meet all these people!

"Mr Cholmondeley is a clergyman, nothing shining either in person or manners, but rather somewhat grim in the first, and glum in the last. Yet he appears to have humour himself, and enjoys it in others.

"Miss Cholmondeley I saw too little of to mention.

"Miss Fanny Cholmondeley is rather a pretty pale girl; very young and inartificial, and, though tall and grown up, treated by her family as a child, and seemingly well content to really think herself such. She followed me whichsoever way I turned; and though she was too modest to stare, never ceased watching me the whole evening.

"Miss Forrest is an immensely tall and not handsome young woman. Further I know not.

"Next came my father, all gaiety and spirits. Then Mr William Burke.

"Soon after, Sir Joshua returned home. He paid his compliments to everybody; and then brought a chair next mine, and said,—

"'So you were afraid to come among us?'

"He went on, saying I might as well fear hobgoblins, and that I had only to hold up my head to be above them all.

"After this address his behaviour was exactly what my wishes would have dictated to him for my own ease and quietness; for he never once even alluded to my book, but conversed rationally, gaily, and serenely; and so I became more comfortable than I had ever been since the first entrance of company.

"Our confab was interrupted by the entrance of Mr King, a gentleman, who is, it seems, for ever with the Burkes; and presently Lord Palmerston was announced. . . .

"A violent rapping bespoke, I was sure, Mrs Cholmondeley, and I ran from the standers, and, turning my back against the door, looked over Miss Palmer's cards; for you may well imagine I was really in a tremor at a meeting which has been so long in agitation, and with the person who, of all persons, has been most warm and enthusiastic for my book.

"She had not been in the room half an instant, ere my father came up to me, and, tapping me on the shoulder, said, 'Fanny, here's a lady who wishes to speak to you.'

"I curtsied in silence; she curtsied too, and fixed her eyes full on my face; and then, tapping me with her fan, she cried,—

"'Come, come, you must not look grave at me.'

"Upon this, I te-he'd; she now looked at me more earnestly, and, after an odd silence, said abruptly,—

"'But is it true?'

"'What, ma'am?'

"'It can't be! tell me, is it true?'

"I could only simper.

"'Why don't you tell me? but it can't be—I don't believe it!—no, you are an impostor!'

"Sir Joshua and Lord Palmerston were both at her side—oh, how notably silly must I look! She again repeated her question, 'Is it true?' and I again affected not to understand her; and then Sir Joshua, taking hold of her arm, attempted to pull her away, saying,—

"'Come, come, Mrs Cholmondeley, I won't have her overpowered here!'

"I love Sir Joshua much for this. But Mrs Cholmondeley, turning to him, said, with quickness and vehemence,—

"'Why, I ain't going to kill her! don't be afraid I sha'n't compliment her! I can't, indeed.'

"In this comical, queer, flighty, whimsical manner she ran on till we were summoned to supper; for we were not allowed to break up before; and then, when Sir Joshua and almost everybody had gone downstairs, she changed her tone, and, with a face and voice both grave, said,—

"'Well, Miss Burney, you must give me leave to say one thing to you; yet, perhaps you won't, neither, will you?'

"'What is it, ma'am?'

"'Why, it is that I admire you more than any human being! and I can't help it.'

"Then, suddenly rising, she hurried downstairs.

"Sir Joshua made me sit next him at supper; Mr William Burke was on my other side; though afterwards I lost the Knight of Plympton, who, as he eats no suppers, made way for Mr Gwatkin, and, as the table was crowded, stood at the fire himself. He was extremely polite and flattering in his manners towards me, and entirely avoided all mention or hint at *Evelina* the whole evening: indeed, I think I have met with more scrupulous delicacy from Sir Joshua than from anybody, although I have heard more of his approbation than of almost any other person's."

Mrs Cholmondeley continues to persecute her. "Pray, Miss Burney, is there anything new coming out?" and "Well, I wish people who can entertain me would entertain me."

"To the last of these speeches I made no answer, but Sir Joshua very good-naturedly turned it from me by saying, 'Well, let every one do what they can in their different ways; do you begin yourself.'

"'Oh, I can't,' cried she; 'I have tried, but I can't.'

"'Do you think, then,' answered he, 'that all the world is made only to entertain *you?*'"

The veteran painter, Allan Ramsay, at this period some sixty-five years of age, was Sir Joshua's only rival in social distinction among the artists, and with him our master, although he did not pretend to any great sympathy for his art—then already a little old-fashioned—maintained a cordial interchange of civilities. From no fault of his own, but for reasons which have already been made sufficiently clear, he was unable to keep up a like degree of intimacy with Gainsborough, Romney, or any of his more serious competitors for public favour.

Boswell records a dinner on April 29th (1778) at the house of the King's Painter, at which Lord Binning (the Earl of Haddington's son), Dr Robertson the historian, Sir Joshua, and Mrs Boscawen, one of the most amiable of the Blues, were present. Here, before Johnson arrives, we find the conversation turning upon the spoiling of him by his friends—a spoiling, by the way, which is not a little like the obsequiousness of the school-boy towards the man who wields the rod. Boswell manfully defends his hero-worship against the good-natured strictures of Dr Robertson. The *fidus Achates* remarks: "His power of reasoning is very strong, and he has a peculiar art of drawing characters, which is as rare as good portrait-painting." And to this Sir Joshua replies, with his usual dispassionate fairness, on a point with regard to which he is peculiarly capable of pronouncing: "He is undoubtedly admirable in this; but in order to mark the characters which he draws, he overcharges them, and gives people more than they really have, whether of good or bad." We note in Allan Ramsay's conversation, even when as

here it is barely recorded in outline, a certain width of general culture to which Reynolds, with all his natural urbanity and quiet humour, with all his comprehensive interest in things many and various, can hardly pretend.

Next day, Johnson, in a good humour with the feast, and satisfied no doubt with the preponderant part that he has taken in the conversation, says to his unwearying admirer: "Well, sir, Ramsay gave us a splendid dinner. I love Ramsay. You will not find a man in whose conversation there is more instruction, more information, and more elegance than in Ramsay's." It is at the dinner on the following May 2d, at Sir Joshua's, that, the Doctor's overfed vanity having apparently been wounded by the comparative lack of attention with which he has been treated by certain guests, not precisely of the Johnsonian school, he once again turns publicly upon the unfortunate Boswell.

"He attacked me"—says the biographer—"with such rudeness that I was vexed and angry, because it gave those persons an opportunity of enlarging upon his supposed ferocity and ill-treatment of his best friends. I was so much hurt, and had my pride so much roused, that I kept away from him for a week; and perhaps might have kept away much longer, nay, gone to Scotland without seeing him again, had not we fortunately met and been reconciled."

In the naïve scene of reconciliation which ensues, Boswell, remonstrating with the penitent doctor, shows an unexpected fineness of feeling when he explains: "I said to-day to Sir Joshua, when he observed that you *tossed* me sometimes, I don't care how often or how high he tosses me when only friends are present, for then I fall

upon soft ground; but I do not like falling upon stones, which is the case when enemies are present." We may agree with his amusing piece of self-commendation, "I think this is a pretty image, sir," without going quite so far as Johnson's soothing rejoinder, "Sir, it is one of the happiest I have ever heard."

At the annual exhibition of the Royal Academy in 1778, the vast "Marlborough Family" was the *pièce de résistance* of Sir Joshua's display.

His other contributions, fewer in number than usual, perhaps on account of the unusual labour involved in working up the great canvas upon which he had been engaged, were:—A half-length of Dr Markham, Archbishop of York—(now at Christchurch); full-lengths of Miss Sarah Campbell, and of Mr Campbell, with a Dog.

In connection with the "Marlborough Family," Northcote tells an anecdote of his master, which is significant as showing Reynolds's singular lack of arrogance in connection with his art, and his willingness to take a hint, from whatever quarter it might come.

"A young artist, named Powell, was much employed in making small copies of Sir Joshua's pictures, which he executed with much accuracy and taste. Having brought a copy of the *Marlborough Family* to Reynolds for his inspection, he was surprised at his finding much fault with the effect of the background. Powell protested that he could not make it better; when Sir Joshua comforted him by the assurance that it was his own picture with which he was offended, and not with the copy. He afterwards altered the background of the original. I can easily believe this story. I remember that West once said to me, 'Employ somebody to copy your pictures, if you want to know their faults.'"

Gainsborough outnumbers his President this year, sending no less than ten contributions, among them being the full-length "Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire," now at Althorp, and which was lent by Earl Spencer in 1885 to the Gainsborough Exhibition at the Grosvenor Gallery. It is this picture that Horace Walpole marked in his catalogue as "bad and washy," a description which, it must be owned, this great master of the brush was sometimes careless and superficial enough to deserve. Its design has nothing in common with that of the too famous "Duchess of Devonshire" in the big hat, of which all that remains is the spirited monochrome sketch—or perhaps rather reduction—lent by Viscount Clifden to the Gainsborough Exhibition. Among the other portraits shown by the same painter on this occasion, were those of the Earl of Chesterfield, Mrs Dalrymple, and Mr Christie.

Wright of Derby, for the first time unfaithful to the Incorporated Society, sends, not his powerful portraits—such as the downright "Richard Arkwright"—but an "Eruption of Vesuvius," the outcome, like some similar pictures of his visit to Italy in 1773; "Edwin" (from Dr Beattie's "Minstrel"); and "Sterne's Captive." The "Edwin" was at Burlington House in 1886, when the Old Masters Exhibition included a selection from the works of the English Honthorst. Stothard also makes his *début* on this occasion with a "Holy Family."

This year Sir Joshua published the *Seven Discourses* pronounced, up to that date, at the Royal Academy, with a dedication to the King, which has been much and not undeservedly commended as a model of dignified eulogy never descending to fulsomeness. In this again it is difficult to avoid suspecting the finishing touches of Johnson or another of Reynolds's many literary friends;

indeed, the artificial equilibrium of the Johnsonian periods is most noticeable.

"By your illustrious predecessors," writes the President, "were established marts for manufactures, and colleges for science; but for the arts of design, those arts by which manufactures are embellished and science is refined, to found an Academy was reserved for your Majesty. Had such patronage been without effect, there had been reason to believe that Nature had, by some insurmountable impediment, obstructed our proficiency; but the annual improvement of the Exhibitions, which your Majesty has been pleased to encourage, shows that only encouragement had been wanting. To give advice to those who are contending for royal liberality has been for some years the duty of my station in the Academy; and these *Discourses* hope for your Majesty's acceptance, as well-intended endeavours to incite that emulation which your notice has kindled, and direct those studies which your bounty has rewarded."

Among the portraits upon which Sir Joshua worked about this time was the half-length of Lady Beaumont, wife of the noted connoisseur and less admirable dilettante, to whose generous initiative the National Gallery in its infancy owes so much. So great is, indeed, its indebtedness, that pardon may be extended to him even for his pernicious heresy regarding "brown trees," and its corollary that all works which respected themselves must be saturated with a bituminous sauce. The lady was famed for the exquisite courtesy and tact with which she dispensed her husband's liberal hospitalities to artists, and for the genuine kindness which, carrying out his chief aim, she was wont to extend to the

younger and less firmly-established members of the fraternity. The portrait, which would appear to have been completed in 1779, was not exhibited at the Royal Academy until 1780, where it was shown, after the modest fashion of that day, merely as "Portrait of a Lady." It was, by Sir George Beaumont, contributed to the Reynolds Exhibition of the Grosvenor Gallery in 1884. Another portrait of this time is the well-known one of Mrs Payne-Gallwey, carrying her little boy pickapack—one of the most popular and representative, if not precisely one of the most thorough of the artist's performances of this class. It gives just that pretty presentment of maternity and childhood, with a dash of self-consciousness and elegant affectation, which is perhaps for the larger public the most attractive phase of Sir Joshua's art, although, in the eyes of the judicious, it may not constitute his most lasting claim to immortality. The lady was Philadelphia, daughter of James Delancey, Lieutenant-Governor of New York, and married Stephen Payne-Gallwey of Tofts, Norfolk; the picture was, in 1886, lent by Lord Monson to the Old Masters Exhibition at Burlington House.

To 1778 belongs also the group, "Master and Miss Parker," a delightfully fresh and charming portrait of the children of Reynolds's friend, Mr Parker of Saltram (afterwards Lord Boringdon), in which the little boy, dressed in a red coat, has his arms round the waist of his sister, who sits demurely, decked in a mob cap and pink ribbons. This was No. 145 at the Reynolds Exhibition, to which it was lent by the Earl of Morley, a descendant of this pretty boy, who was himself afterwards the first earl.*

* Judging by a reproduction in that useful publication, the *Bilderschatz*, the picture—or its double—must have recently crossed the Channel, and found its way into the Feuillet de Conches Collection.

Among the names of sitters in 1778 is found that of Edmund Malone, who was then fast obtaining a place in Sir Joshua's inner circle of friends. He was, in 1780, to make his first appearance as an author, with two volumes supplementary to Steevens's edition of *Shakespeare*. Later on, he added to his literary reputation by the part taken in exposing the splendid forgeries of Chatterton. His well-known edition of *Shakespeare*, which met with very general acceptance, and long maintained itself, did not appear until 1790. It was in 1797 that, assuming unto himself the pious office of literary as well as testamentary executor of his dead friend, he published, with a preliminary *Memoir* to which frequent reference has already been made, his first edition of the *Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds*. The portrait painted at this time is not that presented to the National Portrait Gallery by Mr William Agnew after it had appeared at the Reynolds Exhibition in 1884; this last was done in 1786, and engraved by Bartolozzi in 1787.

It is in Sir Joshua's Eighth Discourse, delivered as usual at the distribution of prizes on the 10th of December, that occurs the famous dictum that the masses of light in a picture must always be of a warm, mellow colour, yellow, red, or yellowish white, and that the blue, the grey, or the green colours are to be kept almost entirely out of these masses, and to be used only to support and set off the warm colours. This technical precept has been dealt with in a preceding section of the volume, in connection with Sir Joshua's own earlier portrait of Miss Jacobs. Certainly, however surprising Gainsborough's success in the famous "Blue Boy"—his practical protest, as has been almost universally assumed against the too absolute acceptance of Sir Joshua's theory—it appears so much a successful *tour de force* as fairly to constitute the excep-

tion which proves the rule. And then, are not the white lights of the sheeny blue satin in which the handsome youth of the picture is dressed just that "warm, mellow colour," that "yellowish white," which is Sir Joshua's desideratum? *

The commencement of the year 1779 finds the master busily engaged on the great design, or rather series of designs, in oils, for the West Window of New College Chapel, Oxford, among which, indeed, as is proved by the painter's own notes on their method of execution, the "Hope" and the "Justice" must have been completed by the end of the year 1778.

The original intention had been to prepare only cartoons for the several compartments of the great window, but, as Reynolds himself informed Mason, he found it so much easier to use the brush than the crayon, that he resolved to execute paintings where he had planned drawings. Pretty obviously he shrank from the severe ordeal of preparing designs deprived of the glamour with which his fascinating brush would know how to surround them, and his estimate of the limitations of his powers in this direction was manifestly the right one.

The original scheme for the window had been to distribute the various figures in different places in the chapel, but, on Sir Joshua's suggestion, this plan was abandoned, and the stone mullions were altered, so as to leave in the centre one large compartment for the main composition, at the base and sides of which the subsidiary subjects were to be grouped.

* Among the greatest artists whose works furnish argument against the unqualified acceptance of Reynolds's precepts, as here laid down, are:—Paolo Veronese; Rubens, in several altar-pieces, with the "Assumption of the Virgin;" Van Dyck, both in religious works and portraits; and, above all, Vermeer of Delft, in more than one of his wonderful studies of colour and light.

Malone gives extracts from two letters addressed by the master to a fellow of New College, the latter of which (dated January 9th, 1778) is important as giving in full his preliminary scheme for the great decoration, in which he evidently had in view from the beginning an amalgam of the styles of Raphael and Correggio, both so closely and enthusiastically studied by him in his early Italian days, yet hitherto not very seriously emulated in practice.

"Supposing," he says, "this scheme to take place" (meaning the alteration in the window just mentioned), "my idea is to paint, in the great space in the centre, Christ in the manger, on the principle that Correggio has done it, in the famous picture called the *Notte;* making all the light proceed from Christ.

"These tricks of the art, as they may be called, seem to be more properly adapted to glass-painting than any other kind. This middle space will be filled with the Virgin, Christ, Joseph, and angels; the two smaller spaces on each side I shall fill with the shepherds coming to worship; and the seven divisions below with the figures of Faith, Hope, and Charity, and the Four Cardinal Virtues; which will make a proper rustic base or foundation for the support of the Christian Religion.

"Upon the whole, it appears to me that chance has presented to us materials so well adapted to our purpose that, if we had the whole window of our own invention and contrivance, we should not probably have succeeded better."

This scheme is the one adhered to in the finished composition and its definitive interpretation in stained glass. The design is, as to the general distribution and the combination into one coherent whole of the com-

ponent parts, a very fine one; the suave harmony in the main lines, and the homogeneity of the various sections being, indeed, remarkable, when it is taken into consideration that Reynolds was here attempting an untried branch of his art. In the figures of the Christian and the Cardinal Virtues, which, as the master points out, constitute the base of the composition, though there is no plagiarism in the narrower sense of the term, the influence has manifestly been that of Raphael's great symbolical figures in the Stanze, and more especially of those two which, shortly after his death, were painted in oils by his scholars, on the walls of the *Sala di Costantino*.* In the great central compartment of the "Nativity," the method of illumination, the exaggerated grace and sweetness of the design, are avowedly those of Correggio, and, as such, hardly suited, either in line or colour, to the style of decorative art upon which the President had now, for the first time, embarked. The shepherds are depicted in two side-lights on either side of the central composition, resembling the wings of an altar-piece; on the one side, two shepherd-children seen by torchlight; on the other, two older shepherds adoring the star in the East, in whom, after the classical Italian fashion, Reynolds has portrayed himself and the glass-painter Jervas. This happy arrangement is to be found in some of the great altar-pieces of Titian, but more especially in those of Rubens. For the Virgin in the "Nativity," and the "Charity" in the lower section of the window, the fair Mrs Sheridan had favoured Sir Joshua with sittings.

The "Nativity," together with the three separate figures of Faith, Hope, and Charity, appeared at the exhibition of the Royal Academy in 1779, but Sir

* It is clear, too, that the master has not forgotten Andrea del Sarto's chiaroscuro virtues in the cloisters of the Scalzo, at Florence.

Joshua, dissatisfied with the hurried execution of the first-named piece, took it back at the close of the exhibition, and continued to work upon it during the rest of the year. It was purchased by the Duke of Rutland for the then unparalleled price of £1200, and perished in the great fire at Belvoir Castle which engulphed so many important works by the master. The "Angel resting on a Cloud" belongs, it is believed, to the Duke of Portland; the compartment with Sir Joshua and Jervas as shepherds, to Earl Fitzwilliam. The whole window, with its mullions, has been well engraved in stipple by G. S. and J. G. Facius, who also produced large reproductions, executed separately, of all the component parts.

Haydon has written enthusiastically of the Oxford window:—"I have gained immense knowledge from the examination of these pictures. I prefer the Charity—it may take its place of any Correggio on earth."

An interesting note in Leslie and Taylor's biography informs us that, at the great sale of paintings belonging to the Marchioness of Thomond, the seven Virtues, being put up separately, were all, one after the other, bought by the Earl of Normanton, at prices amounting in the aggregate to no less than £5565. He had previously made an offer to the executors to purchase them by private contract. The same authority states that, seven years after, Seguier, acting on behalf of the King, offered Lord Normanton double the purchase-money, which was refused; and then again, returning after a similar interval—this time on behalf of the National Gallery—offered treble the amount originally paid, but with the like negative result.

CHAPTER VIII

Court-Martial on Admiral Keppel—Commemorative Portraits painted by Sir Joshua—Presented to Dunning, Lee, Burke, and Erskine—Death of Garrick—Exhibition of 1779—"Viscountess Crosbie"—Sir Joshua's Momentariness—The Oxford Window as carried out—Portrait of Gibbon—His Personal Appearance—Sir Joshua's Serenity—"Collina" and "Sylvia"—Death of Topham Beauclerk—Lady Diana Beauclerk—The Royal Academy in its New Quarters at Somerset House—First Exhibition there (1780)—Attractive Display by Members—Walpole on Reynolds—Mrs Thrale's Portrait—Dr Burney's Portrait—Offie's Marriage—Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*—His Estrangement from Mrs Montagu—Walpole on the Quarrel—Mrs Thrale in Grosvenor Square—Miss Emily Bertie as "Thais"—"The Ladies Waldegrave"—Walpole on the Picture—Death of Thrale—Exhibition of 1781—"Master Bunbury"—Tour in Flanders and Holland—Notes on the Pictures—Opie the "Cornish Wonder"—His rapid Success.

SOME short reference is necessary to one of the most stirring incidents of the time, the trial by court-martial of Reynolds's lifelong friend, Admiral Keppel, since one of its results was the commission given to our master to paint the Admiral's portrait, and from it three (perhaps four) similar originals, to be presented to the illustrious lawyers and friends who, aided by the irresistible popular feeling, had so triumphantly conducted his defence.

At a moment of great national anxiety he had been entrusted with the command of the Channel Fleet, with Sir Hugh Palliser as second in command. After some

initial successes, Keppel, finding himself overmatched in numbers, had the courage, though he knew the ministerial press hostile to him, to put back to St Helens; but, being subsequently reinforced, he challenged the French fleet off Ushant on the 12th of July 1778. A signal given by the Admiral to renew the attack upon the enemy, after a pause to repair damage, was obeyed by his own ships, but ignored or misunderstood by Sir Hugh Palliser, who was in command of the rear, the result of this hesitation being that the French succeeded in escaping to their own coast. Keppel endeavoured at first to screen his second in command, but Palliser having been attacked in the newspapers, and having the effrontery to demand from Keppel a denial of the charges made against him, the latter found himself compelled to refuse this testimony in favour of his subordinate, whereupon the latter made formal charges against his commander, to answer which he was brought to court-martial in the beginning of 1779.

A more inspiringly national, a more conspicuously British episode cannot well be imagined than that furnished by this trial, at which Keppel was professionally supported by Dunning, Lee, and Erskine—the foremost counsel of the day—and surrounded by friends, among whom were the Royal Dukes and many of the most brilliant personalities in the aristocracy and the world of politics. A passionate enthusiasm for Keppel coloured the whole proceedings, affecting the very admirals who were sitting in judgment upon him; culminating after his triumphant acquittal, and the censure passed upon Sir Hugh Palliser, in a scene of delirious joy in court, and of riotous vengeance on his official and other detractors taken by the mob outside, for which it would be difficult to find a parallel even at this moment of national effer-

vescence. Keppel cockades, Keppel sign-posts, Keppel table-cloths and spoons became the rage, and ladies wore Keppel caps, much as their sisters on the other side of the water added the "Belle Poule' to their already overpowering coiffures.

Sir Joshua, in a characteristic letter of felicitation addressed to his old friend, formulates with perfect heartiness and sincerity his own congratulations and those of the circle of friends; giving, without much comment, yet with a sly glee, an account of the depredations committed by the rioters at the Admiralty, and in the houses of ministers and Admiralty lords, and of the complete gutting of Sir Hugh Palliser's house in Pall Mall. Nothing could be truer or simpler than these felicitations addressed to the friend and patron of his early days; yet somehow the note of passion in friendship, of a heart-stirring affection, is wanting. Once more we see that the emotional element, whether in love or friendship, is not in the serene and noble nature of our master, and this must be accepted as the keynote of his character, yet without reproach.

The grateful Admiral had presented to Lee, Dunning, and Erskine, for their professional assistance, bank notes for £1000 each; but Lee and Dunning had returned their fees, an example which, it appears, the *res angusta domi* prevented Erskine from following. Lee having asked Keppel for his picture, and over-modestly proposing Dance as the painter, the Admiral made up his mind to sit to Sir Joshua, and ordered four repetitions of the portrait to be executed. One of these canvases was, until lately, with the family portraits at Quiddenham, while the others went respectively to Lee, Dunning, and Burke, the completion of the repetition destined for Erskine being delayed until some four years from this

date. That presented to Dunning (afterwards Lord Ashburton) has, since 1864, been in the National Portrait Gallery. It shows the old hero overblown, yet still vigorous notwithstanding all the vicissitudes through which he had passed, and with an aspect which, notwithstanding his Dutch descent, is thoroughly British, in the best sense of the word. He wears a plain naval uniform, a dark blue coat, faced with white and gold, without epaulettes, and a white waistcoat trimmed with gold. It is of the example of the portrait presented to Burke* that, writing in after years to Keppel's nephew the Duke of Bedford, the great statesman says:—

"It was painted by an artist worthy of the subject—the excellent friend of that excellent man from their earliest youth, and a common friend of us both, with whom we lived for many years without a moment of coldness, of peevishness, of jealousy, or of jar, to the day of our final separation."

Here, then, as in the whole context from which the quotation is selected, rings forth that passionate note, that affectionateness in friendship, which was wanting in Sir Joshua's own nature, faithful, true, and full of service to his friends as he ever was.

The "Admiral Keppel" painted in 1780, and which, with the remaining pictures forming the Peel Collection, passed in 1871 into the National Gallery, cannot well be one of this series of portraits. The Admiral here appears out of uniform, dressed in a plain claret-coloured suit; he rests one hand on his sheathed sword, the other on his hip, the background being a view of the sea.

It was this year (20th January 1779) that Garrick

* Bequeathed by his widow to Earl Fitzwilliam.

who had long been ailing, died after a short illness which all the leading physicians of the day in vain strove to combat. He was followed to his grave at Westminster Abbey by a company more illustrious, and more various in the completeness with which it represented the aristocracy, the clubs, politics, literature, the church, the medical faculty, the stage, and society generally, than any assemblage that the century had seen under similar circumstances. Even Sir Joshua's own memorable funeral ceremony fell, if anything, just a little short of this, if not in splendour, yet in distinction and representativeness. For any parallel to the great function in our own time we must turn to the recent obsequies of Lord Tennyson in the same consecrated home of British worthies.

To the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1779 Sir Joshua sent, besides the "Nativity," and the "Faith," "Hope," and "Charity" already referred to, three full-lengths of ladies, including the lovely portrait of Lady Louisa Manners (formerly at Peckforton, and now in the collection of Lord Iveagh), and the altogether exceptional "Viscountess Crosbie," a crowning and extreme example of that much-praised momentariness to which we have already had such frequent occasion to refer. The picture —glowing with colour, though not with colours—shows this vivacious lady standing full face in a landscape, dressed in the painter's favourite yellowish white, with a gold scarf round her waist. With her left hand extended towards the right of the picture, she literally seems to sweep athwart the canvas, so that a kind of uneasiness, lest the view given of her fascinating presence should be only momentary, oppresses the spectator. The attitude and the suggested movement are as audacious as anything the modernity of this end of the nineteenth century—even that of Mr John Sargent himself—has produced.

It may well be argued, and it would be difficult to gainsay such an argument, that here is an example of all that it is more dangerous to attempt in portraiture; that to erect into a principle what is here a fascinating exception would be to import into the art which, of all others, should busy itself with the permanent in aspect and characterisation, rather than with the ephemeral in movement and gesture, a disturbing, a detestable element. Yet such is the force of genius, that when, as here, the *tour de force* is successfully performed—as it was, to compare lesser things with greater, in Mr Sargent's much-discussed "Portrait of Mrs Hugh Hammersley," exhibited in 1893 at the New Gallery—the effect is irresistible, and the critic reasoning from unanswerable principles is reduced to silence.

This notable picture was last seen in public at the Old Masters Exhibition of 1891 at Burlington House, at which time it had already passed from the possession of the Crosbie family (of Ardfert Abbey, Kerry) into that of Sir Charles Tennant.

Other contributions made by the President to the exhibition on the same occasion were:—A full-length of a Young Lady; portrait of a Lady and Child; portrait of a Gentleman; portrait of Andrew Stuart.

It is recorded by Mason that Sir Joshua was woefully disappointed with the execution by the glass-painter Jervas of his designs, especially that of the "Nativity." "I had frequently," he said, "pleased myself with reflecting, after I had produced what I thought a brilliant effect of light and shadow on my canvas, how greatly the effect would be heightened by the transparence which the painting on glass would be sure to produce. It turned out quite the reverse." Truth to tell, this was not a period in which decorative art applied to glass painting had any

chance of being understood; the bright, clear tints, the even diffusion of light, which are indispensable elements of a successful glass picture being sacrificed in favour of the fashionable chiaroscuro, with its alternations of yellow light and deep shadow. Sir Joshua's rich sunset harmonies, suggesting now Rembrandt, now Titian, now Rubens, were of all hues, the least suitable for translation into painted glass, and the opaqueness of Jervas's colours did not mend matters.

Here, again, Horace Walpole showed himself a more acute critic and judge than any of his contemporaries. When the glass paintings were exhibited at Charing Cross, with the rest of the room darkened to heighten their effect —much after the fashion which obtains to-day in New Bond Street, when what are termed sacred works are exhibited —he saw at once, while admiring, that, when they were put up in the place for which they were destined, their appearance would be very different. The light in the chapel of New College could not, he pointed out, be reduced without making it too dark, and with others conflicting the effect would be lost. This was at a moment, too, when all the world was in ecstacies over the beauty and dazzling effect of Sir Joshua's performance as interpreted by his glass-painter.

It was in 1779 that the master painted the famous portrait of Gibbon, reproduced by Hall in 1780, which was to become the type of all the engraved portraits. The brilliant historian was sunning himself in the fame derived from the first volume of his great work, which had appeared in 1776, and was leisurely preparing the two subsequent volumes which were soon to come out. He looks here a much younger man than he is, in a brilliant scarlet coat and waistcoat and white lace tie, wearing his own hair *en perruque*. The picture is in the very

The Viscountess Crosbie

front rank of Reynolds's character-portraits, and is, above all, remarkable for the audacious realism with which he preserves the *embonpoint* of his friend, whose type, with its insignificant nose and abnormally heavy chin, would be frankly comic, were it not that the expression of genuine power and intellectuality dominates and sobers the spectator, who might, on the first glance, find himself on the highroad to a smile. Still, the personal appearance, and the aplomb with which it is carried off, quite bear out Horace Walpole's statement (made, be it remembered, during a temporary hiatus in their acquaintance) that "the great writer is vain, even as to his ridiculous face and person." Who was it, by the way, who said of Gibbon, "His mouth, mellifluous as Plato's, was a round hole, almost in the centre of his visage"?

Walpole is too good a judge of what is excellent in style, if not in matter, not to have the highest admiration for his literary friend's comprehensive grasp and power. At the same time, there appears to mix with his admiration a certain physical repulsion, and with it a desire to assume the master-critic, and to maintain in their relations —notwithstanding his assumed humility—a footing of literary equality which he is very far from feeling. What his real feeling in the matter is, we gather when we find him writing, with reference to Gibbon's answer "to the monks who have attacked his two famous chapters":—

"It is the quintessence of argument, wit, temper, spirit, and, consequently, of victory. I did not expect anything so luminous in this age of darkness."

The portrait in the red coat, with its frank reproduction of the sitter's facial peculiarities, gives added *vraisemblance* to the famous story of his presentation to the blind

Madame du Deffand—a story which, harmless as it is, *la pruderie anglaise* forbids us to transcribe in these pages The picture, which belongs to the Earl of Sheffield, was at the Old Masters in 1884, and subsequently appeared at the Guelph Exhibition of the New Gallery.

Caricatural portraits of Gibbon, both by the accomplished Lady Diana Beauclerk and by J. Walpole (believed to have been a cousin of Horace Walpole), are in the Collection of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum. The one and the other appear to be based on Reynolds's realistic portrait, which they do not over much exaggerate.

In this year of 1779, a general agitation and fear of invasion by the French possessed society and the country generally. Moreover, with a French and Spanish fleet blockading Plymouth, as it did in the autumn of the year, and a French frigate capturing the Dover and Ostend packet, with the Duchess of Leinster, Mrs Damer, and Lady William Campbell on board, the fear was by no means as groundless as it may now appear. That, amidst this general agitation, and the feverish social gaiety by which it was accompanied, Sir Joshua maintained—as some may think to an excessive degree—his wonted serenity, is conclusively shown by an interesting letter to his friend and patron, the Earl of Upper Ossory, preserved in Leslie and Taylor's pages. Part of it deserves transcription, as being peculiarly significant of his enviable equanimity under all circumstances :—

"I have been as busy this summer, in my little way, as the rest of the world have been in preparing against the invasion. From the emptiness of the town I have been able to do more work than, I think, I ever did in any summer before. My mind has been so much occupied with my busi-

ness that I have escaped feeling those terrors that seem to have possessed all the rest of mankind. It is to be hoped that it is now all over, at least for this year."

The evidence at first hand of this frame of mind in the artist, wrapped up in his work and happily incapable of concentrating his attention upon anything else, inclines us to give greater credence than before to such stories as that of Protogenes tranquilly painting on while Demetrius Poliorcetes battered and stormed his native Rhodes; and that similar one of Parmegianino busily putting the finishing touches to his great "Vision of St Jerome" (now in the National Gallery), when the walls of Rome had actually been scaled, the city stormed, and the Imperialists of the Connétable de Bourbon were running from house to house intent on spoil.

It was this year that Sir Joshua painted Lady Gertrude Fitzpatrick, the little daughter of Lord Upper Ossory and his Countess, as "Collina,"—a title derived, no doubt, from the gently sloping eminence on which the child is placed. It is but a foolish one, like most of those with which the master's studies of children were tricked out. Sir Joshua was, however, in many cases, guilty only of consent; the offending names being tacked on by the engravers. Notwithstanding a strong admixture of affectation, the picture is one of the loveliest of its class—that intermediate one between the absolute sincerity of the "Crossing the Brook" and "Cupid as a Link-boy," and the absolute mannerism of the "Muscipula" and "Robinetta." It is in error that Leslie and Taylor describe this picture on two occasions, in footnotes, as having been engraved as "Sylvia, the Mountain Maid." The picture to which they refer is the companion one of Collina's sister, Lady Anne Fitzpatrick, a not less

charming invention, showing the little maid ("Sylvia") in a wooded landscape. "Collina" belongs to the Dowager Lady Castletown of Upper Ossory, and was No. 153 at the Reynolds Exhibition in 1884; "Sylvia" was No. 132 at the Old Masters in 1871, to which exhibition it was lent by Lady Lyveden.

Among the sitters of this year, other than those who have already been mentioned, were Miss Monckton, one of the most noted *précieuses* among the Blues, and afterwards, as the Countess of Cork, still more conspicuous for her social eccentricities; the Duchess of Hamilton; the Countess of Bute, walking in a garden, umbrella in hand; Lady William Gordon, mother of the beautiful child who sat later on for the much-copied "Angels' Heads" in the National Gallery. The likeness of the last-named lady is a very pleasing and simple bust portrait, in which, rather exceptionally for Reynolds, the sitter is seen quite full face, wearing a black mantilla, with a white cap on her powdered locks. This is the picture now in the possession of the Hon. Mrs Meynell-Ingram at Temple Newsam;* one apparently identical with it in design and arrangement was lent to the Reynolds Exhibition at the Grosvenor Gallery by the Marquis of Hertford.

Among the male portraits is that one of Admiral Barrington at Greenwich Hospital, the sky of which, it appears, being painted with blue verditer instead of ultramarine—the colour Sir Joshua imagined he was using—turned from blue to green, so that when it was returned to the master for repairs, he owned that he could scarce believe it to be the picture he had painted.

The gaiety of The Club was temporarily eclipsed—to use the Johnsonian phrase—by the death this spring of

* Engraved by J. Raphael Smith, 1780.

one of the most prominent and agreeable members, Topham Beauclerk, a fine gentleman and a brilliant wit, for whom Dr Johnson himself—to say nothing of the other members—professed the greatest admiration and affection. They bickered occasionally, as did most of the members, except the unruffled Sir Joshua, who was generally the spectator of the affray, and the opportune peace-maker, rather than the participant in its sword-play. Johnson now and then felt himself a little nonplussed by the extreme readiness of Beauclerk, as well as overshadowed by his superior breeding and air of the great world. Still, the Doctor loved his friend, and when Lord Althorp, meeting him at Mrs Vesey's very soon after the death, observed: "Our Club has had a great loss since we met last"—could reply in all sincerity: "A loss that perhaps the whole nation could not repair!" Speaking of the wonderful ease with which the deceased wit uttered good things, he went on to say: "No man was ever so free, when he was going to say a good thing, from a look that expressed that it was coming; or when he had said it, from a look that expressed that it had come." An exquisite compliment, in truth, and one expressed with a neatness and simplicity in refreshing contrast to the usual Johnsonian sententiousness!

Beauclerk's wife was the accomplished amateur painter, Lady Diana Beauclerk, for whose art Horace Walpole professed so extravagant an admiration. We find him, when he writes to William Mason in 1778—to explain that he is not going to attend the Academy Dinner, "only to figure the next day in the newspapers, in the list of the geniuses of the age"—praising, in the most enthusiastic fashion, the lady's portrait of the Duchess of Devonshire, just engraved by Bartolozzi, and winding up by asking, "What should I go to the Academy for?

I shall see no such *chefs-d'œuvre* there." And again we find him contrasting—rather *à propos de bottes*—Gibbon's "good sense and polished art" in the great History with what he is pleased to call "the great original genius" of Lady Di in the seven large drawings in "sut-water," made by the lady to illustrate scenes in Walpole's *Mysterious Mother.* Here the panegyric is so enormous that one could not but suspect that the critic—by no means inclined to give way to indiscriminate enthusiasms where persons other than his own particular friends are concerned—had his tongue a little in his cheek; were it not that, in his laudations of the lady-artist, he almost invariably gushed in this hyperbolic fashion.

Moreover, the sincerity of his admiration is further proved by the fact that he constructed a special closet for the exhibition of these drawings at Strawberry Hill, and christened it the Beauclerk Closet—hanging them there in state, on Indian-blue damask. In another passage he spoke of the same designs as "seven scenes that would be fully worthy of the best of Shakespeare's plays—such drawings, that Salvator Rosa and Guido could not surpass their expression and beauty." Lady Di, among many other things, did, in 1796, a set of illustrations (engraved by Bartolozzi) for the Hon. W. R. Spencer's translation of Bürger's "Lenore." Reynolds had himself painted her as far back as 1763, when she was still Lady Bolingbroke. He is stated to have thought highly of her artistic abilities, and to have said, in his own courteous fashion, that "many of her ladyship's drawings might be studied as models."

On the occasion of the Exhibition of 1780, the Royal Academy, which had since 1771 had its private apartments and its school at Somerset House, definitively transferred its domicile thither, giving up the exhibition-rooms in Pall Mall, and inaugurating the great saloon

with a top-light, which had been specially constructed in the right wing of the new building, fronting the Strand.

The Library ceiling was decorated with a Raphaelesque figure, by Sir Joshua, of Theory, seated on clouds—the two points of a compass issuing from her head like rays—holding a scroll, on which is inscribed "Theory is the knowledge of what is truly nature:" it is almost his only attempt in this difficult and ungrateful branch of his art, so much valued in Italy and France. This is now to be found, with some other remains of the Somerset House decorations, in the Diploma Gallery at the Royal Academy.

The Library had further, in the coves, four figures by Cipriani, symbolising "Design," "Character," "Commerce," and "Plenty," and casts from Ghiberti's great central gates to the Baptistery of Florence, the first works of the *Quattrocento* to find general acceptance in England. In the Lecture Room, the ceiling of which was decorated by West, Angelica Kauffmann had figures of "Genius," "Design," "Composition," and "Painting," of which the "Design" is now to be found in the Diploma Gallery. It is a charming figure, in which for once the facile artist has not taken the classicality of her art too seriously, but has agreeably *chiffonné* her draperies, somewhat after the fashion of Sebastiano Ricci and Tiepolo. Here appeared for the first time Sir Joshua's full-lengths of the King and Queen, the only pictures, it is said, for which he actually had sittings from Their Majesties. That the task was not precisely a labour of love is pretty evident from the result, for the portraits, though characteristically rich in colour, are among the most perfunctory and spiritless that Sir Joshua, in his maturity, produced. They contrast greatly to his disadvantage with the brilliant presentments by his preferred rival,

Gainsborough, of the royal couple and their family. Especially does one call to mind that spirited and charming full-length of Queen Charlotte, which appeared at the Academy in 1781, and is now at Buckingham Palace. Here the magic ease and frankness of the painter's brush have almost vivified into sprightly elegance the kindly, stolid countenance of King George's consort, while reproducing its main characteristics; the gala dress of white, embroidered with gold, worn by the Queen, is a masterpiece of execution. Gainsborough's portrait was last seen in public at the Guelph Exhibition of the New Gallery, where it was No. 57 in the catalogue.

In the same chamber at Somerset House was, among other portraits, that of Sir Joshua himself, in his academic robes, a repetition, but not absolutely a duplicate of the picture painted some years previously for the Painters' Gallery of the Uffizi.* This new version was, according to the mezzotint of Valentine Green, "Painted by himself for the Royal Academy, 1780." It was in the first Old Masters Exhibition at Burlington House in 1870, and again at the Reynolds Exhibition of the Grosvenor Gallery, and now usually hangs in the Council Chamber of the Royal Academy. Next to it, in the Lecture Room at Somerset House, appeared Sir Joshua's well-known portrait of Sir William Chambers, in which his friend and colleague is depicted in a crimson velvet coat, looking out at the spectator as he momentarily ceases from drawing. The background shows a portion of his newest and most important creation, Somerset House itself.

The first exhibition in the fine new quarters of the Academy was memorable for more reasons than one, but chiefly because the members had evidently made excep-

* In this portrait appears as an adjunct the bust of Michelangelo, which, as has been seen, is *not* to be found in the earlier Florence version.

tional efforts to lend an additional attractiveness to their initial show. It was then that the catalogue first took the form to which it has ever since, with but little variation, adhered.

Sir Joshua's own display was perhaps, as a whole, not so imposing as on some previous occasions. He sent the "Lady Beaumont," and the portrait of Gibbon, to which reference has already been made; a portrait of the Earl of Cholmondeley; a full-length of Lady Worsley in Hants militia uniform; Miss Elizabeth Beauclerk, daughter of the lately deceased Topham Beauclerk and Lady Diana, as Spenser's Una (lent by Lord Normanton to the Old Masters in 1883); the popular, much-engraved full-length of little Prince William Frederick, son of the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, in a Vandyck dress, holding a hat and stick.* This last is that charming and exceptional thing, a blonde Sir Joshua: blonde not only in the colour of the pretty boy's hair, but in the whole tonality, the balance of which has been well preserved. Lastly came the finished design of Justice for the Oxford window.

The contribution of Gainsborough on this occasion was, on the other hand, of overwhelming attraction. Besides six landscapes, including, "Horses drinking at a Trough" and "A Review on Warley Common," there were a whole series of portraits, among which those of General Conway, and of that notorious swashbuckler, the semi-clerical editor of the *Morning Post*, "Parson Bate," otherwise the Rev. Sir Henry Bate Dudley, Bart. West had, besides some royal portraits, the "Battle of the Boyne," the "La Hogue," an "Ægisthus," and a "Raising of Lazarus." Richard Wilson showed, among other things, a "Review on Wimbledon Common," a "View in St James's Park, with Gipsies," and "Apollo

*Now at Trinity College, Cambridge.

and the Seasons." Somewhat after the fashion of Teniers, painting, with all its treasures *in situ*, the Brussels collection of Archduke Leopold William, Zoffany contributed, as the fruits of a stay in Italy, his "Tribuna of the Uffizi," with paintings in miniature of the pictures and sculpture brought together in this famous saloon of the Florentine Gallery; Fuseli exhibited "Satan starting from the Touch of Ithuriel's Spear;" Copley, a "Portrait of Major Montgomery;" Flaxman, the sketch for a monument to Chatterton, showing the poet dying in the arms of one Muse while another looks on lamenting.

It was during the terrible week between Friday the 2d and Friday the 9th of June that London was given over to the No Popery riots of Lord George Gordon's frenzied mob, and on this occasion even the President's serenity would appear to have been ruffled. Not more than in reason, however, considering that Somerset House, with the brand-new Academy, was one of the buildings which had been marked out for attack, and that Sir George Savile's mansion in his own Leicester Fields was gutted under his very eyes, and a bonfire made of the furniture.

In the autumn Sir Joshua paid another visit to Devonshire, halting at Bagshot as the guest of his lifelong friend Admiral Keppel, and then proceeding to Spitchwick, in one of the wildest valleys of Dartmoor, on a visit to the illustrious lawyer and politician Dunning, soon to be Lord Ashburton.

In the last volume of Horace Walpole's *Anecdotes of Painting*, published this year, occur two significant passages with regard to our master, which must be once more quoted:—

"How painting has rekindled from its embers, the

works of many living artists demonstrate. The prints after the works of Sir Joshua Reynolds have spread his fame to Italy, where they have not at present a single painter that can pretend to rival an imagination so fertile that the attitudes of his portraits are as various as those of history."

. . . . . .

And again:—

"Sir J. Reynolds has been accused of plagiarism for having borrowed attitudes from ancient masters. Not only candour but criticism must deny the *force* of the charge. When a single posture is imitated from an historic picture, and applied to a portrait, in a different dress, and with new attitudes, this is not plagiarism but quotation; and a quotation from a great author, with a novel application of the sense, has always been allowed to be an instance of parts and taste, and may have more merit than the original. Is there not humour and satire in Sir Joshua's reducing Holbein's swaggering and colossal haughtiness of Henry VIII. to the boyish jollity of Master Crewe? One prophecy I will venture to make: Sir Joshua is not a plagiary, but will beget a thousand. The exuberance of his invention will be the grammar of future painters of portraits."

It would be difficult, indeed, to put the case better for Sir Joshua, or more entirely from his own point of view, than Walpole here does. If the master does borrow an attitude or a motive from a great predecessor, he borrows, as a rule, only to develop and metamorphose; making his own the material so appropriated, and infusing into it a new life and a new intention. In so doing he is in the best possible artistic company—in that of Raphael, who does

not scruple to borrow from Masaccio and Filippino Lippi in the Carmine Chapel—taking motives, too, even from the prints of Schöngauer and Dürer—to say nothing of his progressive assimilations from Timoteo Viti, Perugino and Pinturicchio, Leonardo, Fra Bartolommeo, and Michelangelo. He finds himself, too, in the company of Michelangelo himself, who makes his own the motives of Donatello—compare the "St George" of the latter with the "David" of the former—and, above all, appropriates the reliefs of Giacomo della Quercia in the central portal of S. Petronio at Bologna, some of which re-appear without disguise in the great ceiling compartments of the Sixtine Chapel.

A kind of preliminary harangue (counting as the Ninth Discourse) is made by the President on the 16th of October 1780, on the opening for the first time of the Academy Schools in the new building; and on the 10th of December, on the occasion of the usual distribution of prizes, he delivers his Tenth Discourse.

In 1781 was finished the well-known "Mrs Thrale with her Daughter Queenie" (afterwards Viscountess Keith), intended as the crowning decoration to the Streatham library, but which, we are informed, Thrale himself did not like, while Mrs Thrale, in after years, declared it—her opinion has already been quoted—to be "less like my father's daughter than Pharoah's." The two figures are framed in a landscape; to the right appears Mrs Thrale seated on a stone bench, her head resting on her left hand, while Queenie kneels beside her. The picture, of which repetitions exist, was not apparently in any contemporaneous exhibition. It appeared at the Royal Academy in the winter of 1871; being again shown at the Reynolds Exhibition, and yet again in the "Century of British Art" Exhibition at the Grosvenor Gallery, in

1888. It was, until recently, in the collection of Louisa, Lady Ashburton, at Kent House, Knightsbridge.

Dr Chas. Burney's portrait—the last of the series—destined to be engraved in stipple by Bartolozzi for the Doctor's *History of Music*, was also painted about this time. Sir Joshua, who portrayed his friend in the crimson robes of a Doctor of Music, appears to have approached the work with more than common zest, prophesying, with his usual optimism (or had the phrase by this time become common formula?) that it would be the best of the Streatham group of portraits. When exhibited in 1781 at the Academy, it was noted by Walpole as excellent, and Sir Thomas Lawrence ranked it very high among the works of his illustrious predecessor. The portrait is now in the possession of the Ven. Archdeacon Burney; a repetition belongs to the University of Oxford, by which it was contributed to the Guelph Exhibition at the New Gallery.

It is worth while to peruse, in Leslie and Taylor's biography, the letters which passed between the kindly President and his favourite niece, Offie, on her engagement to Richard Lovell Gwatkin, a Cornish gentleman of fortune. The kindness is here again perfectly genuine, the good wishes expressed with perfect sincerity, yet, of any thrill of emotion, natural to such an occasion, there is hardly a trace. And let it not be alleged, as a complete answer to such an observation, that the language of the time in correspondence was too formal to admit of any such expression. For does not Johnson himself, with all his sententiousness and formality, often express intensity of friendship and affection with a passion as strong almost as that of love itself?

It was in March 1781 that the Doctor at last completed his *Lives of the Poets*, which, he says, "I wrote in my usual way, dilatorily and hastily, unwilling to work,

and working with vigour and haste." It is the contemptuous tone adopted by the autocrat in the *Life of Lord Lyttleton* that gave such offence to Mrs Montagu and the attendant *précieuses*, and produced the tragi-comic rupture between the rival powers. Johnson especially censured his lordship because he returned thanks to the "Critical Reviewers" for having "kindly commended" his *Dialogues of the Dead*, and overwhelmed him with the crushing "poor Lyttleton"—the epithet which more especially ruffled the crests and arched the backs of the Blues. "*Dieu! que les héros ont de terribles faiblesses!*" For does not Mrs Thrale suggest that a rivalry of Johnson and the aristocratic poet in the good graces of Miss Hill Boothby (not as Boswell erroneously has it, that other flame of Johnson's, Molly Aston) was the cause of all this depreciation? And for such an assumption, little worthy as it may seem, there would appear to be considerable foundation.

This year the Blues were more *en évidence* than ever, and Walpole who, as has been seen, was almost alone in taking the humorous view of their learning, their judgment and their extreme pretensions, gives many an amusing peep at their conversaziones and routs. Writing on January 14th of this year to the Countess of Ossory, he says:—

"I was much diverted with your setting Mrs Montagu on her head, which, indeed, she does herself, without the aid of Hermes. She is one of my principal entertainments at Mrs Vesey's, who collects all the graduates and candidates for fame, where they vie with one another till they are as unintelligible as the good folks at Babel. . . ."

And again—writing later in the same month to his

confidant, William Mason (apparently before the final publication of the *Lives*, but when, as we gather from results, that of Lyttleton must, at any rate, have been before the public) :—

"Mrs Montagu and all her Mænades intend to tear him (Dr Johnson) limb from limb for despising their moppet, Lord Lyttleton."

And yet again in February, to the same :—

"I think I shall soon compass a transcript at least of *Gray's Life* by Demogorgon (Dr Johnson) for you. I saw him last night at Lady Lucan's, who had assembled a Blue-Stocking meeting in imitation of Mrs Vesey's Babels. It was so blue, it was quite Mazarine blue. Mrs Montagu kept aloof from Johnson, like the west from the east."

And once more, in March of the same year, to the same correspondent, on the subject of the quarrel :—

"*A propos*, 'Poor Lyttleton' were the words of offence. Mrs Vesey sounded the trumpet. It has not, I believe, produced any altercation, but, at a Blue-Stocking meeting held by Lady Lucan, Mrs Montagu and Dr Johnson kept at different ends of the chamber, and set up altar against altar there. There she told me, as a mark of her displeasure, that she would never ask him to dinner again."

Mason rejoins, on March 29th, still on the same engrossing topic :—

"I have a great mind to weave it into a mock epic

(a certain monologue previously half written), could I get the least hint of a squabble between Queen Ashtaroth (Mrs Montagu) and Dagon (Johnson). If that matter goes further, pray give me early intelligence. A grave answer would do him too much honour, and to whip him on the back of his patrons would suit my fancy best."

Johnson himself naïvely remarks of the quarrel :—"Mrs Montagu has dropped me. Now, sir, there are people whom one should like very well to drop, but would not wish to be dropped by." Whereupon his faithful biographer goes on to observe that he certainly was vain of the society of ladies, and could make himself very agreeable to them when he chose it. "Sir Joshua Reynolds agreed with me," he says, "that he could. Mr Gibbon, with his usual sneer, controverted it, perhaps in resentment of Johnson's having talked with some disgust of his ugliness, which one would think a *philosopher* would not mind."

Bearing in mind Reynolds's two masterpieces, portraying the two great men, one cannot but think this a case of "pot and kettle" with a vengeance.

The alarming disturbances in Southwark, which had formed part of the Gordon Riots in the preceding year, had given Mrs Thrale an added disgust for the house attached to the Southwark brewery, and this season she induced her husband to become the tenant of an imposing mansion in Grosvenor Square. She thus came in more direct competition with the sister Blues than heretofore, and held her own, as she, the most gifted of them all, and the only true wit among them, was surely entitled to do. The following is, however, much too

studied, too mechanical in its sparkle, to show her at her best :—

"Yesterday I had a conversazione. Mrs Montagu was brilliant in diamonds, solid in judgment, critical in talk, Sophy (Streatfield) smiled, Piozzi sung, Pepys panted with admiration, Johnson was good-humoured, Lord John Clinton attentive, Dr Bowdler lame, and my master (Thrale) not asleep. Mrs Ord looked elegant, Lady Rothes dainty, Mrs Davenant dapper, and Sir Philip's * curls were all blown about by the wind."

Some of Sir Joshua's most famous performances date from this year, and a good many of them, as will presently be seen, went to make up his memorable show at the Academy in the spring. First the "Thaïs," † for which, according to Miss Burney, Miss Emily, a celebrated courtesan (variously known as Emily Bertie, Emily Pott, Emily Coventry), sat, at the desire of the Hon. Charles Greville. A scandalous story was current, at the time the picture appeared at the Exhibition, to the effect that the fair and frail lady had commissioned the portrait, and then, for lack of funds, left it on the master's hands ; and that he had thereupon, as a vengeance, converted it into a Thaïs. It appears, however, much more in consonance with the fashion of the time that Charles Greville should have commissioned and paid for the portrait, and himself have selected the impersonation. The presentment of a fashionable courtesan in such a character as that of Alexander's lovely mistress would probably have been regarded as complimentary rather than offensive.

* Sir Philip Jennings Clerk, a dressy but old-fashioned beau.

† Formerly at Peckforton, and now in the collection of Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild.

Have we not seen Sir Joshua, at an earlier stage, portraying Kitty Fisher as Cleopatra and then as Danaë; and, at this very time, too, painting another of his most famous fancy portraits, the "Mrs Nesbitt as Circe"? This shows the mistress of Augustus John, third Earl of Bristol—the putative husband of Elizabeth Chudleigh, Duchess of Kingston—as the baleful, irresistible sorceress, and is one of the most attractive pictures of its special class, which is assuredly not that in virtue of which Sir Joshua will deserve the highest rank. The date generally assigned to the work is the year 1781, but Mr F. G. Stephens has controverted this view in his Historical Notes to the Catalogue of the Reynolds Exhibition. It was lent by its owner, the Dowager Lady Stanley of Alderney, to the Old Masters in 1876, and again to the Reynolds Exhibition in 1884. Another portrait, showing the same lady in a white dress with a dove, is now in the Wallace Collection at Manchester House.

Still—to return for a moment, after this digression, to Miss Emily Bertie—it may be said that Circe is a goddess, Danaë the beloved of Jove, Cleopatra, if only the beloved of Jove's representatives on earth, yet, in her own right, a queen; and that Thaïs only occupies the throne of love. The nearest approach to such a portrayal is the famous portrait in the Bâle Museum, in which Holbein exhibits, with an almost Leonardesque fascination and skill, Dorothea Offenburg—a beauty of the Swiss city, more remarkable for vivacity and variousness than for a close adherence to the *convenances*—as *Laïs Corinthiaca*, and again, in more complimentary fashion, as Venus herself.

To this year belongs, also, the picture which, if not the most thorough or the most masterly, is, on the whole, the most popular and the most fascinating of all Sir Joshua's

portrait-groups; unless, indeed, it be deemed that it has a rival in these respects in the later "Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, with her Child." It is, as may be guessed, the celebrated picture of Horace Walpole's great-nieces, the Ladies Waldegrave,* to which reference is here made. These are Lady Elizabeth Laura, afterwards Viscountess Chewton and Countess Waldegrave; Lady Charlotte Maria, afterwards Countess of Euston; and Lady Anna Horatia, afterwards Lady Hugh Seymour. It has been often told, but may be once more repeated, that each of the beautiful Ladies Waldegrave was, at the time the picture was being painted, suffering under a matrimonial disappointment, and that each of them was supposed to have "behaved well" under the circumstances. Walpole, writing to William Mason, says:—

"You will be charmed, I flatter myself, with poor Horatia, who is not at all well, but has behaved with a gentleness, sweetness, and moderation that are lovely. She has had no romantic conduct, concealed all she could, and discovered nothing she felt, but by her looks. She is now more pleasing, though she looks ill, by her silent softness, than before by her youthful vivacity. Maria, almost as much wounded and to be pitied, carries off another kind of misfortune with a noble spirit. These three charming girls inherit more of their mother's beauty than her fortune. Each has missed one of the first matches in the country. Lady Laura, Lord Carmarthen; Lady Maria, Lord Egremont; and Lady Horatia the Duke of Ancaster; after each had proposed and been accepted."

Writing to the same correspondent about the picture, he says:—

* Formerly in the possession of Lord Carlingford, and now belonging to Mrs Thwaites.

"Sir Joshua began a charming picture of my three fair nieces, the Waldegraves, and very like. They are embroidering and winding silk; I rather wished to have them drawn like the Graces adorning a bust of the Duchess as the Magna Mater; but my ideas are not adopted. However, I intend to have the Duchess (of Gloucester) and her two other children as Latona, for myself."

As Walpole's ideas would have resulted in something like the "Three Ladies adorning a Term of Hymen," at the National Gallery, in which the beautiful heads are almost overwhelmed by the mannered, pseudo-classic accessories of the design, it is well for Sir Joshua, and well for the world, that they were not adopted. We should then have been the poorer by a work in which studied elegance of line and arrangement are not dragged in *quand même*, but naturally evolved from a simple and charming motive, thoroughly well adapted to express the beauty and the character of the sitters.

Walpole, who had praised while the work was in progress, waxed somewhat less enthusiastic when the time for final payment arrived. "Sir Joshua Reynolds gets avaricious in his old age. My picture of the young Ladies Waldegrave is no doubt very fine and graceful, but it cost me 800 guineas." It is only fair to add that the correctness of this statement has been controverted, it being alleged that the true figure was not 800 but 300 guineas. The former sum is vastly in excess of any price otherwise paid by an individual to the President for a canvas of the like dimensions, the Duke of Marlborough having been charged the year before, for the vast family picture which has been described, only 700 guineas, though this comprised no less than eight elaborately-grouped

figures. Two years later, writing to Mason, Walpole is in a very bad temper indeed, and ruthlessly critical of Sir Joshua :—

"Sir Joshua's (hands) are seldom even tolerably drawn. I saw t'other day one of, if not the best of, his works, the portrait of Lord Richard Cavendish. Little is distinguished but the head and hand, yet the latter, though nearest to the spectator, is abominably bad. So are those of my three nieces, and though the effect of the whole is charming, the details are slovenly, the faces only red and white; and his journeyman, as if to distinguish himself, has finished the lock and key of the table like a Dutch flower-painter."

Making his own private notes on the Academy Exhibition of this year, Walpole is more unreservedly complimentary. He speaks of the picture as "a most beautiful composition, the features very like, and the attitudes natural and easy! He did another of them with variations, and I think still finer." Of this still finer repetition, as to which one would imagine Walpole to be well instructed, there appears, nevertheless, to exist no trace. It is perfectly true that the technique of the finely-poised girlish heads appears slight as compared with such works as the "Lady Cockburn" of 1773-5, and still more so when contrasted with the more thoroughly-modelled productions of the earlier time. The execution here much resembles that of the lovely "Mrs Braddyll" which dates a few years later, and will be noticed in its proper place. Still, the grace and charm, the comparative naturalness with which the group of fair English gentlewomen is placed before the spectator, the ease with which they wear their lofty, powdered *têtes* and

white dresses, the felicity of the motive which unites them round the same tambour-frame, the richness and variety of the harmony which has been obtained from the elements of what is practically a white picture, go far to justify the praise bestowed upon it, and to explain its universal popularity.

Thrale had, in the early part of the preceding year, had an apoplectic stroke, from which he recovered beyond the expectation of his physicians; yet he kept his family and friends in a constant state of alarm from his inability to check his indulgence in the pleasures of the table. Mrs Thrale, indeed, writes of him in that year to Dr Johnson: "He *will* eat, I think, and, if he does eat, I know he will not live; it makes me very unhappy, but I must bear it." On the 4th of April of this year, the very day which had been fixed for one of his wife's brilliant, Blue-with-a-difference assemblies in Grosvenor Square, the brewer died of a stroke of apoplexy. The loss must have been sensibly felt by Reynolds, who had enjoyed the hospitality of the Thrales for fourteen years, and between whom and the Streatham household the painting of the long series of Streatham portraits had established strong bonds of intimacy. Still, the loss was far from being as essential a one to the opulent and universally acceptable Sir Joshua as it was to Dr Johnson. The latter, though he was appointed one of the executors, with a legacy of two hundred pounds, and not merely with resolution, but even with some zest, set about his onerous duties in that capacity, must have had from the beginning misgivings that the comforts which the brewer's home had afforded him would now cease.

Sir Joshua's contribution to the year's Academy consisted of no less than fourteen pictures, many of which have been already described:—

"Thaïs" (heavy, unconvincing in attitude and gesture).

Portrait of Dr Burney (the Streatham picture).

Portrait of Mr Thoroton (painted for the Duke of Rutland).

The Duke of Rutland's children.

"Master Bunbury."

This last is one of the loveliest and most famous of all Sir Joshua's portraits of children, and it fully deserves its reputation. With inimitable truth and sympathy the master places the beautiful boy before us, fronting the spectator without self-consciousness, as he sits in his simple jacket and open shirt, bright-eyed, panting, and eager as a little animal.

"The Death of Dido" (now in the Royal Collection of Buckingham Palace, and contributed by H. M. the Queen to the Old Masters in 1882). This important painting stands relatively high among the so-called inaginative works, but no more than its fellows is one of the performances upon which the admirers of Sir Joshua, and especially those among them who claim for him a place in the very first rank of painters, can look with any pleasure. It is rhetorical and pure Bolognese in sentiment, and, indeed, vaguely recalls not only Guido, the *caposcuola* of the later time, but in lighting and manner, Guercino, whose representation of the same object Reynolds had years before seen in the Spada Palace at Rome.

"Lord Richard Cavendish" (the portrait referred to by Horace Walpole). It depicts the sitter with his right arm extended, resting on a stone, his left hand on his hip; in the background is indicated the Egyptian desert with the head of the Sphinx. This background has, in the engraving of the picture, been exchanged for a rocky, desolate prospect of undefined character.

Full-lengths of the Duchess of Rutland, and the Countess of Salisbury—the former, notwithstanding the portentous height, the ultra-fashionableness of the lady's head-gear, being one of the most charming of the full-length beauty portraits.

"Temperance" (one of the figures for the Oxford window); "Fortitude" (another of the same series):—

"A Child Asleep."

"A Listening (or Laughing) Boy."

"A Lady and Child."

In July, Reynolds undertook that journey to Flanders and Holland, the results of which are embodied in the series of elaborate notes on the pictures seen, which have their place, together with the concluding essay on the *Character of Rubens*, in his collected literary works. The curious in such matters may profitably compare them with that exquisite example of the higher criticism, and of literary perfection, the *Maîtres d'Autrefois* of Eugène Fromentin, who, something less than a century afterwards, went over much the same ground, and, like Reynolds, had a double right to be heard—both as painter and as man of letters.

Our master, accompanied by his friend, Philip Metcalfe, left London on Tuesday, July 24th, 1781, went to Margate, and embarked there for Ostend; proceeded thence to Ghent, Brussels, Antwerp, Dort, The Hague, Leyden, Amsterdam,* Dusseldorf, Aix-la-Chapelle, and Liège. He then retraced his steps to Brussels, and went on to Ostend, landed at Margate, and arrived in London on Sunday, September 16th. Further reference will be made to these notes, and to the *Character of Rubens*, with which they wind up, in the final chapter.

* Haarlem is honoured only with the passing mention,—"Saw Harlem Church and Town House, where are three or four pictures by F. Hals."

Master Bunbury

Towards the end of the year Offie Palmer, now Mrs R. L. Gwatkin, and her husband were sitting to Sir Joshua for companion portraits, of which pair the lady's picture was contributed by Mrs Gwatkin to the Reynolds Exhibition. This shows the master's favourite niece in a black mantilla worn on a white dress, and is said to have been painted over another portrait of Offie, begun before her marriage; at any rate, almost all the work done at that time was painted out and replaced by the extant portrait.

Opie, "The Cornish Wonder," now appears upon the scene as a youth of some twenty years, bringing with him, out of his province, rugged, powerful heads of "Old Men," "Beggars," and naturalistic studies, which cause him to be likened at once to Rembrandt, though his manner—definitively marked out even thus early—is, with its harsh black shadows and powerful, sculptural modelling, much more nearly akin to that of Caravaggio, Ribera, and the *Tenebrosi* generally. He had exhibited at the Incorporated Society in 1780, as "Master Oppey," a boy's head, entered in the catalogue of the exhibition in a fashion so amusing as to deserve commemoration :—

"Master Oppey, Penryn, Cornwall. An instance of genius—not having ever seen a picture."

It is true that in Redgrave's *Century of Painters of the British School*, and in the latest edition of Bryan's *Dictionary of Painters*, this "Master Oppey" is made into a separate person, and dies in 1785. It is difficult, nevertheless, to believe that Master Oppey and Opie are two distinct individuals. It would be too singular a coincidence that there should have issued from the remote

province, at one and the same time, two Cornish Wonders of the same name, both painting more or less by inspiration. It appears far more likely, on the contrary, that this initial appearance of the youthful artist was the *coup d'essai* of his astute protector and Barnum, Dr Wolcott, afterwards celebrated under the pseudonym of Peter Pindar.*

The two, about the time of Opie's first appearance in London, had entered into a kind of partnership, under which Wolcott was to pay all expenses, and receive half the entire profits of Opie's artistic production. From this kind of exploitation the youthful artist, after less than twelve months' trial, abruptly shook himself free, declaring that he could shift for himself; and it is to the credit of Wolcott that he continued to push his *protégé* after this semi-rupture as ardently as before—partly from genuine admiration of his talent, and partly, also, to back his own opinion. Shortly after his arrival, the young provincial, practically self-taught, save for the counsel which he had received from Wolcott while the latter was residing in Cornwall, was introduced to Sir Joshua, and by him received with his wonted encouraging kindness. The studies submitted to the President were a "Jew" and a "Cornish Beggar," and we have evidence that he avowed himself astonished at the power and precocity of the Cornish Wonder.

Northcote tells the story that, having lately returned from the obligatory artistic tour in Italy, he paid a visit to his old master, whereupon the latter, in that teasing tone which he adopted towards his pupil and towards him alone, said:—

* It would appear that there *was*, in truth, another artist prodigy in the family, but not a contemporary of Opie. This was Edward Opie, the great-nephew of our painter (R. Polwhele's "Biographical Sketches of Cornwall")

"Ah! you may go back now, you have no chance here. There is *such* a young man come out of Cornwall!"

"Good ——! Sir Joshua, what is he like?"

"Like!—like Caravaggio, only finer!"

"I was ready to sink into the earth," adds poor Northcote, who was quite conscious of his own limitations, and began to fear that all his pains had been taken, all his money spent to no avail. This fear of rivalry did not prevent him, however, later on, from doing full justice to the powerful art of his young competitor.

Here we find Reynolds striking the right note, and drawing the parallel with Caravaggio, not with Rembrandt, whom our master, his admirer and imitator, was bound to understand better than the dilettanti who pronounced his name in connection with the new chiaroscurist.

Opie's first great vogue was obtained through the commission given to him to paint old Mrs Delany, the favourite of King George III. and his consort, and their close companion at Windsor. It was through Mrs Boscawen, on the premature death of whose son Wolcott had written a touching elegy—or, at any rate, an elegy which she found touching—that Opie was selected to paint the aged lady who was, as it were, a link between the poets and wits of the earlier half of the century, whom she had known, and the Blue circle, by the members of which she was surrounded in its concluding years. The portrait, which, notwithstanding a certain Ribera-like aspect, hardly justifies the reputation that it obtained at the time of its production, remained for a long time in the royal bedchamber at Windsor, and was thence transferred to Hampton Court, where it now remains.

Mrs Delany arranged that her young Cornish limner should be presented to Their Majesties, and should submit to them some of his works. Wolcott has described

in amusing fashion how he spent half the night preceding the momentous interview in putting his young friend through his paces, and ensuring that the salutes to be made to royalty should be of the indispensable number and quality. We know that the presentation, at which West, in his capacity of artistic friend and confidant of the King, assisted, was a success, and that the royal patron purchased two of Opie's studies. Thereupon commissions to paint members of the royal family, great ladies, and beauties rained in, and the world of fashion, so prompt at that moment to take fire and to exaggerate in the one direction or the other, made up its mind for a short period that it *must* be painted by Opie, to the temporary eclipse even of the masters of the most assured vogue and position. This is, however, anticipating events a little.

CHAPTER IX

Portraits of this Time—"Perdita"—William Beckford—Colonel Tarleton—"The Fair Greek"—Sir Joshua's Annotations to Du Fresnoy's "Art of Painting"—Exhibition of 1782—Sir Joshua's Pictures—Gainsborough's "Colonel St Leger," and "Girl with Pigs"—Peter Pindar—Death of Wilson—Fuseli—"Lady Catherine Pelham-Clinton feeding her Chickens"—Sir Joshua's Illness—Barry's Pictures at the Society of Arts—His Explanatory Pamphlet—Exhibition of 1783—Influence of Rubens—Mrs Siddons—Her Portrait as the Tragic Muse—Origin of the Pose—Its Place among Sir Joshua's Works—Miss Fanny Kemble—Miss Burney on Mrs Siddons—"The Infant Academy"—Portrait of Fox—Gainsborough's Quarrel with the Academy—Exhibition of 1784—Sir Joshua's Seventeen Pictures—"Muscipula"—"Countess Spencer and her Child"—Reynolds appointed King's Painter—Dr Johnson's Illness—Italian Journey proposed for him—His Death—Reynolds's Estimate of Johnson.

LORD THURLOW, the Chancellor of the Rockingham Administration, had sat to Reynolds in the course of 1781 for the three-quarter length in which he appears seated, in his official robes, with the mace on the table to his right. This now belongs to the Marquis of Bath, and was by him contributed to the Reynolds Exhibition, where it was No. 64. To about this period, also, must belong two brilliant half-lengths, the companion portraits of two lovely sisters, Lady Elizabeth Seymour and the Countess of Lincoln, daughters of Francis, second Marquis of Hertford, which are at Manchester House, and were, by Lady Wallace, contributed to the Old Masters Exhibition of 1893. Here, though the modelling is not

much more searching than in the picture of the Ladies Waldegrave, the colour shows almost intact that melting splendour, that homogeneous richness which he sacrificed so much to obtain. In these and in some other instances he did obtain what he sought for so completely, and with so unusual a permanence, that we must try to forgive him—if many of his unfortunate sitters very naturally could not—that dangerous restlessness and tentativeness in technique of which his works contain so many and such disastrous examples.

Another lovely and unusually well-preserved piece of colour is the portrait of the Countess of Harcourt (exhibited at the British Institution in 1813, and engraved by S. W. Reynolds), which has recently reappeared after a long seclusion. The young and blooming lady, with her hair unpowdered and lightly veiled with an apology for a scarf, sits under a tree in a park, dreamily gazing upwards. Her beauty is of that impersonal and consequently cold type which is not unusual in Sir Joshua's presentments of female loveliness, and in contemplating it one understands the not infrequent complaints of his sitters, that there is more of pictorial charm than of truth to nature in their portraits. The flesh-tints of the face and arms are seen in almost unimpaired beauty and freshness, and are well set-off by the dress, the hue of which is that favourite orange-tawny, a richer variation of which is seen in the "Lady Cockburn," a deeper in the "Mrs Siddons as the Tragic Muse."

In the beginning of 1782, the beautiful, ill-starred "Perdita," otherwise Mrs Mary Robinson, sat to Sir Joshua for the well-known half-length in which she appears with her hair powdered, wearing a black dress, a white stomacher, a glare, black hat with feathers, and a black band round the neck. The Prince of Wales's fair and much pitied victim

had then already left the stage, and her subsequent liaison with her royal lover had also for some months ceased to exist; but if the portrait did not unduly flatter—and in this case we have evidence that it did not—she was still in the flower of her youth and loveliness. Sir Joshua painted at least one other portrait of her; besides which, of this same picture, more than one repetition exists. The original—glowing, and somewhat tawny in harmony, and belonging to the category of the master's better preserved canvases—was last seen in public at the Guelph Exhibition, to which it was contributed by the Duchess of St Albans.

A still more interesting sitter was William Beckford, then a very young man, in the first bloom of manhood, and only later on to develop into the literary recluse whose eccentricities and deliberate waste of the rarest natural gifts, whose strange, semi-oriental mode of life amid the mysterious splendours of Fonthill, caused the most sinister legends to accumulate round his name. Educated, like a little sovereign or demi-god, in complete isolation, and without the wholesome discipline of a public school, he had in his boyhood received musical instruction from Mozart, he had even been noticed by Chatham. At the age of seventeen, he had given rein to the wilfulness of his talent by writing a burlesque *History of Extraordinary Painters*, intended as a satire on the style of the *Vies des Peintres flamands*. A delightful mixture of boyish fun and true humour was shown in his mystifications of the housekeeper at Fonthill, whom he incited, when going her rounds with visitors to exhibit her master's pictures as by "Watersouchy," "Og of Basan," etc.

When he sat to Reynolds, Beckford, young as he was, had already accomplished the literary feat which remained, after all, his greatest claim to distinction. He

had written in French the extraordinary romance of *Vathek*,* dashing it off at white heat, in a single sitting of three days and two nights, without taking his clothes off the whole time. Composed in 1781, *Vathek* was not, however, published until 1787, when it came out at Lausanne, having been forestalled in 1784 by an unauthorised English translation.

Beckford is here represented by Sir Joshua as a singularly handsome young man of sensitive and voluptuous temperament, in all the freshness of his twenty-three years; he is dressed with much simplicity in a plain black coat. The picture, which appeared this same year, 1782, at the Royal Academy, was last seen at the Guelph Exhibition of the New Gallery, to which it was contributed by the Duke of Hamilton.

Another sitter at this time was a chubby boy of some four or five years, the second son of Mr W. Brummell, who had come to the front as treasury clerk and then as private secretary to Lord North. This little boy, whom Sir Joshua portrayed with his elder brother, at play with their dogs, was afterwards that pinchbeck celebrity, Beau Brummell.

Yet another canvas belonging to this same period is the curious portrait of the brilliant cavalry officer Colonel Tarleton, whose romantic feats as a commander of irregular horse are among the few consolations upon which it is possible to look back amid the depressing records of the American Campaign at its close.† This picture, we are told, he had done for his mother, and in it Reynolds has triumphed over the many difficulties of the absurd, unseemly uniform, and the complicated

* *Vathek* has this year been republished in Paris in the original French, with a preface by the arch-priest of modern symbolism, M. Stéphane Mallarmé.

† No. 160 at the Old Masters in 1871.

accessories introduced. Indeed, as many instances have proved, when the subject was such as to stimulate his intelligence or his artistic enthusiasm, he rarely fell below the height of the argument.

The sitter in whom the public, and especially the hunters and huntresses of lions and lionesses, were most interested for the moment, was Mrs Baldwin, wife of the English Consul at Smyrna—known as "The Fair Greek." The portrait, which belongs to the same fantastic class as the "Polly Kennedy" (though the lady herself has of course nothing in common with that celebrity), shows the beauty of the hour in the piquancy of her semi-oriental loveliness. She is seated in Eastern fashion cross-legged on a divan, robed in striped silk of a rich green hue, and wears an oriental turban or head-dress of doubtful authenticity. The picture, which is finely preserved, was contributed to the Old Masters in 1884 by the Marquis of Lansdowne.

Sir Joshua was in the spring of this year putting the finishing touches to the Annotations which were to appear as an adjunct to William Mason's translation of Charles Alphonse Du Fresnoy's Latin poem, *De Arte Graphica*. Du Fresnoy had been first the atelier companion, and then, in Rome, the inseparable friend of the more celebrated Mignard. He was an accomplished theorist, a fair practician of his art, and, moreover, a scholar and a mathematician. That his powers of execution were respectable, and nothing more, is shown by two pictures from his brush, which are still preserved in the Louvre—a "Ste. Marguerite," and "Les Naïades." This Latin poem on the art of painting, the result of his studies, wanderings, and meditations in Italy, was not matured until his return to France, and not actually published until 1668, three years after the

painter-critic's death, when it was issued with a French translation by De Piles. Dryden had attempted a translation, taken from the French version; it was, however, void of all interest, since declining to endow it with the charm of his versification, he had written in prose. It is difficult to understand what tempted Mason to undertake the rhymed translation upwards of a hundred years after the original had appeared, unless it were the desire to work in collaboration with Sir Joshua, whose Notes, though they run parallel with the Discourses, are, nevertheless, unquestionably the jam which sweetens the pill of boredom. Prefixed to Mason's translation appears a dedicatory epistle to Sir Joshua, which shows the verse of the eighteenth century at its worst, and is too flat and uninteresting to require quotation. Mason although, as his correspondence with Horace Walpole shows, an out-and-out hater of Dr Johnson, was yet a good if not exactly an intimate friend of Reynolds, and, as has been seen, a sedulous frequenter of his painting-room.

At the exhibition of 1782, Sir Joshua, who increases from year to year the number of his contributions, is represented by no less than fifteen canvases:—

The "William Beckford"; the "Mrs Mary Robinson;" the "Fair Greek."

"Lavinia, Viscountess Althorp"* (afterwards Countess Spencer).

"Lady Aylesford"; "Lady G. H. Cavendish" (Lady Betty Compton); Portraits of Children.

"Dr Thomas, Bishop of Rochester" (as Dean of the Order of the Bath); the "Colonel Tarleton;" "Colonel Windham;" "Lord Chancellor Thurlow."

* *Not* the portrait of the lady lent by Earl Spencer to the Reynolds Exhibition (No. 124); perhaps the quite different portrait lent by Dr Hamilton on the same occasion (No. 118).

The "Angel seated on a Cloud, contemplating the Cross"—a design for the figure in the central compartment of the Oxford Window.

Portrait of a Girl.

This was a great year, too, for Gainsborough, who, in more or less friendly competition, shows himself at least the equal of the President; less, perhaps, in the full-length of Colonel Tarleton with a horse, than in the portrait-study of La Bacelli, dancing in a flutter of blue and white skirts—as audacious in its vivacity and momentariness as anything of Sir Joshua's; and in the famous "Colonel St Leger."

The "Bacelli" was formerly at Knole, but has now, it is believed, passed into the collection of Baron Alphonse de Rothschild of Paris.

The "Colonel St Leger" shows the Prince of Wales's boon companion in the scarlet uniform of the Guards, standing against his horse, in an attitude which owes its origin to the invention of Sir Joshua himself. Supreme elegance, the consciousness of supreme fashion, are the characteristics of the portrait, which reveals, in "Handsome Jack Sellinger," a natural distinction such as must have gone far to render palatable his dashing vivacity and absurdity, and the wild pranks of his hot youth.

This picture was painted as a pendant to the very similar one by Gainsborough of the Prince of Wales, exhibited on the walls of the Academy at the same time; the two portraits being destined to be exchanged as tokens of friendship. According to this and many other portraits of the period, Florizel's comeliness was then, in its way, scarcely less remarkable than that of his wild friend, whose high-bred ease and genuine charm he could not, however, rival. The portrait of Colonel St Leger is one of the chief ornaments of the Hampton

Court Gallery, whence it was, in 1885, lent to the Grosvenor Exhibition.*

But no works of Gainsborough's exhibited this year, attracted [so much attention as the popular "Girl with Pigs." This was purchased by Sir Joshua at the price of sixty guineas, and re-sold by him to M. de Calonne, the enhanced price being, however, handed over by the President to the brother artist—a heaping on his head of coals of fire, seeing how slightingly he had repelled Sir Joshua's advances towards a more intimate acquaintance. The passage on the Gainsborough pictures of the year, from Peter Pindar's *Lyric Odes to the Royal Academicians*, deserves quotation, as showing Wolcott in his less virulent mode of criticism, and proving that he possessed, if not melody or variety of versification, a keen eye, and, when his judgment was not biassed by prejudice or self-interest, a measure of the true critical sense.

"And now, O Muse, with song so big,
Turn round to Gainsborough's Girl and Pig,
Or Pig and Girl, I rather should have said:
The pig in white, I must allow,
Is really a well-painted sow:
I wish to say the same thing of the maid.

As for poor St Leger and Prince,
Had I their places I should wince,
Thus to be gibbeted for weeks on high;
Just like your felons after death
On Bagshot, or on Hounslow Heath,
That force from travellers the pitying sigh.

Yet Gainsborough has great merit, too,
Would he his charming *fort* subdue,
To mind his landscapes have the modest grace;

* A full-length of Colonel St Leger by Sir Joshua Reynolds was at the Old Masters in 1884, lent by Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild.

Yet there, sometimes, are Nature's tints despis'd,
I wish them more attended to and priz'd,
Instead of trump'ry that usurps their place."

As scathing and as personally vituperative as a modern French journalist, when he comes to the detested Northcote, Peter Pindar does not leave untouched even Reynolds himself, yet, on the whole, shows for his art an unfeigned, and it may be assumed, a disinterested admiration :—

"Yet, Reynolds, let me fairly say,
With pride I pour the lyric lay
To most things by thy able hand exprest—
Compared to other painting men,
Thou art an angel to a wren !—"

Of Wilson he says :—

". . . old red nosed Wilson's art
Will hold its empire o'er my heart,
By Britain left in poverty to pine.

But, honest Wilson, never mind ;
Immortal praises thou shalt find,
And for a dinner have no cause to fear.
Thou start'st at my prophetic rhymes ;
Don't be impatient for those times,
Wait till thou hast been dead a hundred year."

At this very time Wilson was dying at the village of Llanberry in Denbighshire, in a cottage to which he had succeeded on the death of a brother, just in time to find in it a peaceful refuge for the few remaining months of his miserable life of constantly-renewed struggle and privation.

His noble art had never succeeded in conquering for itself an assured place in the estimation even of the

art-lovers of the time, and he was misunderstood, or under-estimated, even by gentle, equitable Sir Joshua; not out of hostility, of which he has been foolishly accused, but manifestly out of lack of sympathy. Though, since the exhibition of the "Niobe" in Spring Gardens, in 1760, his position in the front rank of landscape painters had not been seriously denied, liberal patrons were few and far between, his canvases exhibited at the Royal Academy remained as often as not unsold, and he was compelled to hawk about his sketches to dealers at prices so trifling that one must blush to quote them. The best proof of his failure to win popular favour is to be found in the circumstance that, although one of the original members of the Royal Academy, he exhibited there in all only thirty-one pictures—from 1769 to 1780 inclusive.

Yet, while his landscapes lack, to a certain extent, the witching colour, the easy breadth, the seductive charm of Gainsborough's, the best of them stand on a level far above that on which we must place the performances, in this branch, of the more popular artist. Notwithstanding the Claude-like classicality of Wilson's conceptions, and his generalised treatment of nature, he showed an incomparably deeper knowledge of her secrets, a far more serious skill in dealing with problems of light and atmospheric effect, than did the more superficial if, to the casual observer, more attractive artist, to whom has somewhat too lightly been accorded the first place among the English landscape-painters of the eighteenth century.

Northcote relates that at a meeting of the Artists' Club, Sir Joshua arrived, having just seen a fine landscape by Gainsborough, and in describing it with enthusiasm to the members, wound up by saying: "Gainsborough is

certainly the first landscape-painter now in Europe." Whereupon Wilson, who, unnoticed by Sir Joshua, was present, burst out irefully: "Well, Sir Joshua, and it is my opinion that he is also the greatest *portrait-painter* at this time in Europe." Sir Joshua, thus rebuked, would appear to have felt, not anger, but regret, and to have frankly apologised, as was the fashion in those days, for making the observation in Wilson's presence.

Fuseli, who had come to the front in 1780 with "Satan starting from the Touch of Ithuriel's Spear" and "Jason appearing before Pelias," achieved his first popular success at this exhibition of 1782 with "The Nightmare," rendered so familiar by J. R. Smith's mezzotint. This portentous composition was the unfortunate result, like most of the Swiss painter's most characteristic productions, of his untiring study of Michelangelo, for whom he professed a passionate worship in excess even of Sir Joshua's platonic love. Even here, however, as well as later on in the contributions to Boydell's Shakespeare's Gallery, and later still, in the ill-starred Milton Gallery—the canvases making up which were entirely furnished by Fuseli—the painter exhibits imaginativeness of a quality not exactly common in the *terre-à-terre* eighteenth century. This has, unfortunately, to force its way to the surface through the grotesque exaggerations of his style and the livid monotony of his colouring, now practically reduced by time to a monochrome, but which must always have been uninviting in the extreme.

No better example of his genuine powers of invention, marred as are their results by grotesqueness and overreaching ambition, is at present to be found than the fanciful "Titania and Bottom," once in the Boydell Gallery, and now on the great staircase of the National Gallery.

It would be interesting to make out the exact artistic relations existing between the three men who, at this period, possessed the largest measure of this peculiar imaginativeness—Fuseli, Flaxman, and Blake; to show the influences exercised over each other by these friends and fellow-workers in fields of art contiguous, if not absolutely identical.

Other sitters at this time were Wedgwood, the head of the great potteries at Etruria; the Burkes, father and son, and the fashionable beauty, Mrs Musters. Sir Joshua had already painted her in 1777, shortly after her marriage, in a full-length which is at Petworth; and again in the celebrated full-length in which she personates Hebe, the date for which in the pocket-book is May 1780. The picture now painted may possibly have been the half-length, in which the "reigning toast of the day"—as Miss Burney describes her—appears in a low-necked dress of light-coloured satin, with her hair dressed high and some curls falling over her shoulders. This is now in the collection of Sir Charles Tennant, and was by him contributed to the Old Masters in 1793.

Miss Burney, whose vogue in the worlds of literature and fashion is very shortly to be enhanced by the publication—in July of this year (1782)—of her second novel, *Cecilia, or the Memoirs of an Heiress*, has left a lively account of one of Sir Joshua's June dinner-parties at his Richmond villa. Here she meets Gibbon, the Dean of St Asaph's and his daughter, the handsome self-possessed Miss Shipley, young Mr Burke, and, more interesting to her than any of them, Burke himself, whom she belauds in such romantic, young-lady fashion, that she does not succeed in characterising him with all her usual felicity of touch.

Among other sitters was the naval hero, Captain

Jervis, and there was also a commission from the Duke of Rutland to paint a posthumous portrait of his brother, Lord Robert Manners, who commanded the *Resolution* in Rodney's action, and died of his wounds on his way home. Among the politicians were Dunning — now metamorphosed into Lord Ashburton—Fox, and Dundas. Mrs Abington reappeared, too, after a long interval, and the lovely Duchess of Rutland posed for a portrait, which is most probably the one burnt in the great fire at Belvoir Castle.

To this or the preceding year must belong one of the most universally popular of the Reynolds portraits of children—and deservedly so, in virtue of its genuine *naïveté*, its spontaneity and truth of movement, and its high-bred grace—the "Lady Catherine Pelham-Clinton feeding Chickens," now in the collection of Lord Radnor at Longford Castle. There is no trace of the picture having been exhibited, unless it be the anonymous "A Girl" which Walpole admired in the Academy of this year, but it was in 1782 mezzotinted by J. R. Smith. It should by no means be confounded with the equally well-known "Mrs Pelham feeding her Chickens," painted as far back as 1770, and which the Earl of Yarborough lent to the Reynolds Exhibition at the Grosvenor Gallery, where its reappearance, after undergoing a too drastic process of cleaning, excited dismay even among those most accustomed to note the progressive ravages of time—and time's ally, the picture-restorer—in Sir Joshua's canvases.

On Sunday, the 3rd of November, Sir Joshua actually gave a sitting to Gainsborough for a portrait, which, had it been completed, it would have been infinitely interesting to compare with the President's numerous versions of his own physiognomy. But it never was completed, for, after this sitting, which was to have been followed by another

on the next Sunday, Sir Joshua was seized with his second paralytic attack—a sufficiently severe one to cause his friends great anxiety, although he nevertheless quickly recovered from it. Thus vanished the most favourable opportunity that could have presented itself for bringing into closer relations the two great masters, and it does not appear that Gainsborough sought, after Sir Joshua's recovery, to resume work upon the portrait, or again made any effort to enter into relations with his rival, until he was on his death-bed.

Dr Johnson writes from Brighthelmstone on November 14th, 1782, in terms, the studied elegance of which rather swamp the affectionate solicitude that pierces through them :—

"DEAR SIR,—I heard yesterday of your late disorder, and should think ill of myself if I had heard of it without alarm. I heard likewise of your recovery, which I sincerely wish to be complete and permanent. Your country has been in danger of losing one of its brightest ornaments, and I of losing one of my oldest and kindest friends ; but I hope you will still live long, for the honour of the nation ; and that more enjoyment of your elegance, your intelligence, and your benevolence is still reserved for, —Dear Sir, your most affectionate, SAM JOHNSON."

Sir Joshua was sent to Bath by his physician to recruit, but returned home and resumed his routine of professional life towards the end of November. He was well enough, at the annual distribution of prizes on the 10th of December, to deliver his Eleventh Discourse.

Barry had, in 1782, been appointed Professor of Painting at the Academy, but overwhelmed, no doubt, with his yet unfinished labours at the Adelphi, he did not deliver his first lecture until March 1784. The friction between him

Lady Catherine Pelham Clinton.

and the President was growing greater and greater, and Barry is stated—it is not known on what authority—to have replied to some observations of Sir Joshua's on the delay in preparing his discourses as professor: "If I had no more to do in the course of my lectures than produce such poor mistaken stuff as your discourses, I should soon have them ready for reading."

In the spring of 1783, the frieze-like decoration for the great room of the Society of Arts in the Adelphi, which he looked upon as his *magnum opus*, being far advanced towards completion, he displayed it to the public, in its place, at an exhibition which, with a rare and characteristic arrogance, he opened on the very day upon which the Academy admitted the public to its galleries. In the notorious pamphlet published by Barry to elucidate his show is contained the following explanation of the scope of his work, in which he adopts the moral and didactic standpoint to the almost entire exclusion of the æsthetic and technical:—

"In this series I have endeavoured to illustrate one great maxim of moral truth, viz., that the obtaining of happiness, as well individual as public, depends upon cultivating the human faculties. We begin with man in a savage state, full of inconvenience, imperfection, and misery, and we follow him through several gradations of culture and happiness, which, after our probationary state here, are finally attended with beatitude or misery. The first is the story of Orpheus; the second, a Harvest-Home, or, Thanksgiving to Ceres and Bacchus; the third, the Victors at Olympia; the fourth, Navigation, or the Triumphs of the Thames; the fifth, the Distribution of Premiums in the Society of Arts, etc.; and the sixth Elysium, or the State of Final Retribution.'

There is a humour in the progression from the fifth to the sixth state of beatitude (on the reverse) which is not the less exquisite because Barry, terribly and enthusiastically in earnest as he was, must have been wholly unconscious of the bathos of his programme.

It was just such a one, both in imagination and expression, as was calculated to win the admiration of Dr Johnson, and we are, accordingly, not surprised to find him, when he writes to Mrs Thrale, passing over, without great wrath, the strictures on Sir Joshua, and the hit at himself, and saying:—"You must, however, think with some estimation of Barry for the *comprehension* of his design."

It is not necessary on the present occasion to quote verbatim the accusations of studied and persistent malevolence made, with the thinnest possible veil, against Sir Joshua, and still less the altogether vile and inconceivable insinuation—a calumny not invented, however, by Barry alone—that he allowed his house to be made use of by sitters for purposes of assignation. Here was enough, and more than enough, to excite the enmity of even the most placid, the least resentful of mortals; and, accordingly, one is but little surprised to find Sir Joshua confessing, long after this, to Northcote, "that he feared he hated Barry." There is no evidence that he, on any occasion, condescends to give effect, by inimical action, to this so-called hatred—a passion so foreign to his nature, that he naïvely confesses it as a new and half-understood thing. It is the bottled-up venom, the passion of envy, generated by a life of strenuous endeavour uncrowned with success, by bitter disappointment, by physical privation, that here finds vent in accusations which the attacker not more than half believes even while he makes them. It is satisfactory to find Barry, later on, outgrowing this causeless suspicion

and hatred of Sir Joshua; supporting him in his unfortunate struggles with the opposite faction in the Academy; and incorporating in one of his professional Discourses, pronounced shortly after the death of the great master, an eloquent and discerning panegyric on his life-work. The strangest thing is to find him in his pamphlet so pre-determined to have his thrust, *quand même*, at the enemy, so eager to depreciate the art of portraiture—or, as he contemptuously phrases it, "the trade of portraits"—as to forget that, with the exception of his own fancied prototype Michelangelo, there is no painter of the highest rank in sacred and imaginative art who has not also achieved marked distinction as a portraitist. Even if Giovanni Bellini, Dürer, Holbein, Titian, Tintoret, Rubens, Van Dyck were unconvincing to the passionate student of what alone he deemed high art—that is, the Florentine, the Roman, the Bolognese—he might have remembered the "Monna Lisa" of Leonardo, the "Maddalena Doni," the "Leo X.," the "Baldassare Castiglione" of Raphael, the splendid performances in this branch of Andrea del Sarto and Bronzino.

The number of Sir Joshua's contributions to the Academy fell this year to ten, and among them were not to be found any of his more popular masterpieces.

They were:—Portrait of Mrs Gosling; a Lady; Miss Faulkner (by moonlight); a Young Nobleman—variously called Lord Albemarle and Lord Cobham; The Duke of Buccleugh's children; Mr Brummell's children (already referred to); Mr Albany Wallis (Garrick's lawyer and executor); Mr Strahan (the printer); Mr Egerton (or *Sir Abraham Hume); Lord Harrington.

* The often-engraved portrait of the young dilettante, which is in the National Gallery (?).

Gainsborough shone, both absolutely and by comparison, with subjects of great variety; among them being the "Shepherd Boys fighting their Dogs," in which the animals are as living and vigorous as the boys are feeble and unconvincing; and the beautiful full-length, "Mrs Sheridan," in which the gentle, diaphanous beauty is shown in greyish-white satin, seated under a tree. This is the famous picture to which reference has already been made as formerly at Delapré Abbey, and now in the collection of Lord Rothschild. Other Gainsborough portraits of the year were those of the Duchess of Devonshire, the Duke of Northumberland, Lord Cornwallis, the King's favourite page, "Billy Ramus"—and, in one frame, heads of the King and thirteen of the royal children. A sea-piece and a landscape furnished further proof of the variousness of the President's most dangerous competitor.

Peter Pindar notes the temporary decline in Sir Joshua's work, and is rather hard on Gainsborough, but seizes the opportunity of crying up thus the portrait of Jackson, the composer, by his young friend, Opie :—

> "Speak, Muse, who formed that matchless head?
> The Cornish boy in tin-mines bred,
> Whose native genius like their diamonds shone
> In secret till chance gave him to the sun."

Concurrently with these two main displays, at the Academy and the Adelphi, Jervas, the glass-painter, opened in Pall Mall the exhibition of his completed window for New College, after Sir Joshua's designs, to which some allusion has been made in a former chapter.

We have it, on the authority of Malone, that the sale of many of the pictures of Rubens being announced in 1783, in consequence of the suppression, by the Emperor Joseph, of certain religious houses, Sir Joshua again in that

year visited Antwerp and Brussels, and devoted several days to contemplating the productions of the great Flemish master. He is said to have remarked to his travelling companion, Metcalfe, on his return from his first tour in 1781, that his own pieces seemed to him to want force. However this may be—and certainly the influence of Rubens, competing as it did with many others, dates from a considerably earlier period—it is beyond question that the pictures of the last eight or nine years of Sir Joshua's practice have a greater bloom and splendour than their predecessors, and while they are marked as a rule by less solidity and finish, give evidence of as genuine a force and vitality as any of the productions of his earlier maturity. Sir George Beaumont communicated to Malone Sir Joshua's impression, on the occasion of his second tour in Flanders, that the Rubenses appeared to him much less brilliant than they had done at the former inspection.

"He could not for some time account for this circumstance, but when he recollected that when he first saw them he had his note-book in his hand, for the purpose of writing down short remarks, he perceived what had occasioned their now making a less impression in this respect than they had done formerly. By the eye passing immediately from the white paper to the picture, the colours derived uncommon richness and warmth. For want of this foil they afterwards appeared comparatively cold."

This is what the modern art-critic would call the value of the white in intensifying the local colours and toning down the lights with which the eye compares it; a little too much allowing himself to imagine that, because the very term was not in use, the Venetians, and the

great colourists whose art was akin to theirs, did not recognise the thing itself.

It was in this year that Sir Joshua first came into a closer intimacy with Mrs Siddons, and painted that famous portrait of the actress as the "Tragic Muse," which, if possible, enhanced his own reputation with his contemporaries, and certainly conferred a new immortality on the great performer whose features and aspect it perpetuated.

As far back as 1775, she had appeared in London, in Garrick's last season, as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, and as Lady Anne to his Richard III., but made then no particular mark, either because she was overpowered by the sunset radiance of the sinking luminary of tragedy, or, more probably, because her powers were not yet mature. Returning to town in 1782, when there was none to divide the public favour with her, she carried all before her in such parts as Almeria in Congreve's *Mourning Bride*, Jane Shore, Calista, Belvidera, and Mrs Beverley; and, a little later on, in those mightier ones of Isabella in *Measure for Measure*, and Constance in *King John*. Not yet, undisputed queen of tragedy as she was, had she ventured upon parts so tremendous as that of Lady Macbeth—then sacred to the memory of her predecessor, Mrs Yates, whom, it may be remembered, Romney had already, some ten years previously, painted as the "Tragic Muse." Under this title, too, Russell, the author of a *History of Modern Europe*, had sung Mrs Siddons in verse; and his panegyric may very probably have suggested to Reynolds the subject, or, at any rate, the name of his picture. There is some doubt as to the exact time in 1783 when the great actress began her sittings, but, on the whole, the most probable period would appear to be the autumn of that

year. The history of the picture is given by Mrs Jameson, on the authority of Mrs Siddons herself. We can imagine Sir Joshua, in his courtly fashion, taking the stately woman by the hand, and leading her to the sitter's chair, with the sonorous Johnsonian compliment: "Ascend your undisputed throne; bestow on me some idea of the Tragic Muse." "Upon which" she added, "I walked up the steps, and instantly seated myself in the attitude in which the 'Tragic Muse' now appears." There is little reason to doubt the authenticity of the anecdote, and the less when we reflect that Melpomene, somewhat staid and stolid in private life, was not inventive enough to have devised or elaborated the compliment just quoted, or that further and still more splendid one which he laid at her feet when he was putting the last finishing touches to the work. "I cannot," he said, "resist the opportunity for going down to posterity on the edge of your garment." Whereupon he then and there painted his name in ornate letters, together with the date, 1784, along the Muse's skirt, so that it did duty as a decorative adornment—much as he had done in the case of the "Lady Cockburn with her Children."

With regard to the influence that the beautiful sitter herself exercised, or deemed that she exercised on the evolution of the design—one of the most carefully elaborated of all Sir Joshua's—there seems to have been some unconscious exaggeration on her part, such as is often generated by successive repetitions of a story at a certain distance of time. Thus, she said to Mrs Jameson that she at once seated herself in the attitude in which the Muse now appears. But she told Thomas Phillips, R.A., "that it was the production of pure accident; Sir Joshua had begun the head and figure in a different view, but while he was occupied in the preparation of some colour, she

changed her position to look at a picture hanging on the wall of the room. When he again looked at her and saw the action she had assumed, he requested her not to move; and thus arose the beautiful and expressive figure we now see in the picture." And again she told Sir Martin Archer Shee that "Sir Joshua would have tricked her out in all the colours of the rainbow had she not prevented him." No doubt the great *tragédienne* was unfamiliar with the first states of an oil picture, and the courtly Sir Joshua may have allowed her to run on uncontradicted, content to receive her reclamations with a seeming acquiescence.

It must be pointed out, however, that the master's Twelfth Discourse, delivered only a few months after the completion of the picture, contains, in the following passage, a striking though indirect corroboration of Mrs Siddons's statement that she had suggested the attitude of the Muse :—

"And here I cannot avoid mentioning a circumstance in placing the model, though to some it may appear trifling. It is better to possess the model with the attitude you require, than to place him with your own hands: by this means it happens often that the model puts himself in an action superior to your own imagination. It is a great matter to be in the way of accident, and to be watchful and ready to take advantage of it: besides, when you fix the position of a model there is danger of putting him in an attitude into which no man would naturally fall."

It may be alleged that Mrs Siddons's story in its entirety cannot altogether be reconciled with the undoubted fact that the general conception of the "Tragic Muse" is coloured with a strong reminiscence of Michel-

angelo's "Isaiah," in the ceiling of the Sixtine Chapel—a fact the less difficult to accept when it is remembered how Sir Joshua had saturated himself with the master in the contemplation of the frescoes in the Cappella Sistina, and had throughout his career maintained his enthusiasm for him at its original high level.

Still, the two versions of the genesis of the picture are by no means radically irreconcilable.

It is not in the least likely that so great an artist, and one so various in portraiture as Sir Joshua, would have hampered himself, and handicapped his sitter, by a premeditated adherence to all the lines of a figure of which the guiding motive was one essentially different from that of his idealised portrait. There is little doubt that he had generally in view Buonarroti's great invention; yet, to obtain a pose correct and natural in all particulars, and, above all, to infuse true significance and true dramatic characterisation into the outlines of the composition as conceived by him, it is easy to believe that he may have relied, to a great extent, on the heroic instincts of the greatest tragic actress of her time. He may—as we know that he did in many cases—have even taken inspiration from her changes of posture, and revised his conception accordingly.

A detailed description of the composition is rendered unnecessary by the reproduction here given. It is in fine preservation, the sombre magnificence of the colouring being much less due to darkening in this instance than to premeditation on the part of the painter. There can be little doubt that the unity of tone obtained by the deep purple and the tawny brownish-yellow of Melpomene's robes gives a greater ideality, a more unbroken repose to the general aspect of the work than could have been obtained by a higher key, a more varied splendour in the

hues of the draperies. For once Sir Joshua attains to his ideal, and achieves what all through his life he has sighed for and written about—high, or shall we not rather say great, art. As great art, and, to say the least, on a level with the work now discussed, must rank several of the finest male portraits. But those were great in virtue of a certain heroic realism, of a certain informing enthusiasm, while greatness is here attained in the more accepted fashion, by splendid dignity of conception, by majesty and rhythmical grace of outward aspect, by impressiveness and significance of colouring.

The least touch of bathos would have brought the picture down from its high level, and placed it on that of the "Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy" and the numerous portraits of some one irrelevantly masquerading as some one else, which cannot be unreservedly accepted, even by the master's most fervent admirers. But even the attendant figures, variously described as "Pity and Terror," "Pity and Remorse," and with more probability as "Crime and Remorse," are sufficiently impressive, especially the one which the master studied from his own features. The figure of Mrs Siddons herself is unique in the life-work of the master, as combining a more portrait-like fidelity than Reynolds often achieved in female portraiture with a genuinely tragic ideality of mien and gesture, due, it must be owned, as much to the natural personality of the sitter as to the conceiving power of the artist.

The original work was bought by the noted amateur, M. de Calonne, for the then very considerable sum of 800 guineas, and, after some intermediate sales, was finally acquired by the first Marquis of Westminster for 1760 guineas. It remains one of the chief ornaments of the Duke of Westminster's rich collection, and has by him been lent on several occasions to public exhibitions—to

Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse

the Old Masters in 1870; then, for a considerable space of time, to the South Kensington Museum; then to the Reynolds Exhibition at the Grosvenor Gallery; and, lastly, to the Guelph Exhibition. The inferior replica at the Dulwich Gallery was painted by Score, one of Sir Joshua's assistants, in 1789, and sold to M. Desenfans for 700 guineas; but, for all its inferiority, it had, as Sir Joshua's own note and the price show, the *imprimatur* of the Reynolds studio. The best replica would appear to be that at Langley Park, Stowe, given by Sir Joshua to Mr Harvey, in exchange for a boar-hunt by Snyders which the painter much admired. Another repetition, of the upper part of the figure only, is, or was, in the possession of Mrs Combe of Edinburgh; and yet another one—of the complete picture—in the gallery of Lord Normanton.

As by Sir Joshua was exhibited at the Guelph Exhibition an imposing full-length, belonging to the Earl of Warwick, showing Mrs Siddons in a black satin gown, with a white scarf wrapped turban-wise round her head, holding in one hand a mask, in the other a dagger. This, however, has, on the high authority of Mr George Scharf, the Director of the National Portrait Gallery, been restored to Sir William Beechey.

It was in 1784 that Gainsborough painted his famous "Mrs Siddons," *en toilette de ville*, now in the National Gallery, and, though the conditions of the two pictures are as absolutely different as they could possibly be, the same serious and a little ponderous personality makes itself felt, even as interpreted by Gainsborough's sprightly brush.

No better description has been left us of the Tragic Muse, as she appeared in private life, preserving, in a lower, quieter key, all the idiosyncrasies of her stage individuality, than that one of Miss Burney's, which so per-

fectly comments and explains the painted portraits as to deserve quotation in its entirety :—

"I found her, the Heroine of a Tragedy—sublime, elevated, and solemn. In face and person, truly noble and commanding; in manners, quiet and stiff; in voice, deep and dragging; and in conversation, formal, sententious, calm, and dry. I expected her to have been all that is interesting; the delicacy and sweetness with which she seizes every opportunity to strike and to captivate upon the stage had persuaded me that her mind was formed with that peculiar susceptibility which, in different modes, must give equal powers to attract and to delight in common life. But I was very much mistaken. As a stranger, I must have admired her noble appearance and beautiful countenance, and have regretted that nothing in her conversation kept pace with their promise; and, as a celebrated actress, I had still only to do the same. Whether fame and success have spoiled her, or whether she only possesses the skill of representing and embellishing materials with which she is furnished by others, I know not; but still I remain disappointed."

At about the same time the master was painting the stage divinity's less imperial, but hardly less lovely, sister, Miss Fanny Kemble (afterwards Mrs Twiss)—herself an actress, until she married Mr Francis Twiss and retired from the stage. She is described in Northcote's *Life* as "Reserved, though mingling with the loud, the vain, and unseduced when syren pleasures reign." This portrait was No. 142 at the Reynolds Exhibition, to which it was contributed by the late Mr George Cavendish-Bentinck.

Within this year, too, comes the popular "Infant Academy," than which hardly any among the master's works

have been more frequently engraved. It perhaps hardly needs to be said that it represents a caricature, by nude, chubby children, of the airs and graces of a fashionable atelier. The painter, a nude boy, sits before his easel, about to transfer to an oval canvas the features of a baby beauty, nude also, but for the large cap and feathers which she wears; yet another child—the obsequious friend or handmaiden—arranges the feather in her cap; while standing by is a companion beauty, her entire form, save the head, wrapped in a diaphanous veil. The rich Rubens-like colour, the easy and, of its kind, masterly execution, the charm of the landscape background, account sufficiently for the popularity of the work. And yet it must surely, with the more serious students of Sir Joshua's art, rank with the most striking examples of that distressingly exaggerated archness, which mars some of his most delicate inventions of this class. It is, in a special phase, the artificiality of the eighteenth century, overcoming, for the time being, with its too studied charm and its deliberate affectation, the artist's natural virility and high-bred grace. The picture was No. 62 at the Reynolds Exhibition, to which it was contributed by Lord Mount Temple. A repetition of the baby sitter's figure alone, known as "The Mob Cap," belongs to the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, and was No. 46 at the Old Masters in 1893.

Charles James Fox was one of the sitters early in the year 1784, at what, for him, was the crucial moment of his political life. He had been Foreign Secretary in 1782, in the ministry of Lord Rockingham, had resigned this office on the death of his chief, and in 1783 formed the famous coalition with Lord North, accepting once more his office of Foreign Secretary. The India Bill, planned with all the enthusiasm, all the commanding energy of which

Burke was capable, and supported by the transcendent oratorical powers of Fox, had been introduced at the time the latter was sitting for his portrait, and Sir Joshua, at his request, introduced the Bill on the table, with the finger of the great statesman, its chief sponsor, pointing to the title. Before the picture was finished the coalition ministry collapsed, on the rejection of the Bill by the House of Lords under the direct influence of the King, and Reynolds, with that tact which might have been expected from the man of the world under the peculiar circumstances of the case, omitted the heading on the document.

Fox, however, saw things in a different light, and insisted on the permanent commemoration of this overwhelming event in his political career. In an interesting letter to the master, quoted in full by Leslie and Taylor, he earnestly requests that the complete title of the Bill be inserted, with the addition, on another paper, of the heading, "Representation of the Commons to the King, March 15, 1784." This was done, as the canvas, now in the possession of the Earl of Leicester at Holkham, proves. It must be owned that, for all the resolute dignity of the attitude, the portrait is not one of the most distinctive that the master has produced, considering that the circumstances were such as to stimulate him to do his best. The same collection also contains the great full-length of Fox, painted towards the close of his career, some twenty years later, by Opie.

The portrait of Fox which is at Eton College and was at the Guelph Exhibition as a Reynolds (as which it is catalogued by William Cotton), does not, in its present state at any rate, suggest the master, or even his immediate surroundings. It is of Opie that one would think, were it not that he did not come into personal contact with the great orator until a much later period.

Reynolds was in 1784—the year which marks, perhaps the highest point of his maturity—to find none to compete with him at the Royal Academy. Gainsborough, whose relations with the corporate body as a whole, and its members in particular, had never been of the most cordial, took offence because his full-length group of the Princess Royal, Princess Augusta, and Princess Elizabeth had been hung on what was called the full-length line, according to the rule then already established, if not absolute law, at the Academy. Having, as he says, painted the picture "in a tender light," he pressed rather unreasonably to have it placed lower, and failing to carry his point, wrote to the council asking to have it, and all his other pictures, returned—a request with which the governing body, with a singular lack of effort to retain so extraordinarily brilliant a member, forthwith complied. The result of the squabble was that Gainsborough during the remaining years of his life sent nothing to Somerset House.

Stubbs had this year been superseded, in consequence of his failure to present his diploma work, and Wright of Derby, who had to a considerable extent identified himself with the old Incorporated Society of Artists, having been elected an associate, declined the honour.

What would those who to-day hold the special privileges accorded, as regards the number of works exhibited, to the members of the Royal Academy, to be excessive and injurious to art, say to Sir Joshua's contribution of no less than sixteen pictures?

These were:—"Dr Chauncy;" "Mr Pott" (the eminent surgeon); "Dr Bourke, Archbishop, of Tuam;" "Lady Honywood and Child;" a portrait of the Prince of Wales with his horse, painted for Lord Melbourne.

The portrait of Charles James Fox already referred to; "Lady Dashwood and Child;" "Master Braddyll"

(a full-length, life-size, one of the best of Sir Joshua's portraits of children).

"Sir John Honywood;" "Lord Leveson;" "A Nymph and Cupid;" the Portrait of Miss Frances Kemble, already referred to.

"Mrs Siddons as the Tragic Muse;" Mrs Abington as "Roxalana" in *The Sultan*—a presentment of the brilliant actress which, for true vivaciousness, for the irresistible buoyancy which must have been her most marked characteristic, is little behind the "Miss Prue" painted some years before.

"Mr Warton;" a "Boy reading" (formerly in Lord de Tabley's collection), and (?) at the Reynolds Exhibition as "The Studious Boy."

One of the best pictures in the exhibition, outside the unsurpassed group of Reynoldses, must have been Opie's "The School," in which the youthful Cornishman depicted an aged but vigorous and upright dame surrounded by her pupils. What is chiefly remarkable here is the Rembrandtesque power and pathos of the old woman—a figure Rembrandtesque, however, only in conception, for the colour is marked by the livid flesh-tints and strong, black shadows which we are accustomed to associate with Caravaggio and the Italo-Spanish school. Here a stern, an almost excessive, gravity take the place of that playfulness and *espièglerie* which almost any other painter of the day would have imported into the subject. "The School" was, under the title "The Schoolmistress," lent by Lord Wantage to the "Century of British Art" Exhibition at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1888.

Among other productions belonging to this time is the meretricious "Snake in the Grass," or "Love unbinding the Zone of Beauty," in the National Gallery—apparently the "Venus" exhibited in 1785 at the Royal

Academy. (Duplicates in the Soane Museum, in Baron F. de Rothschild's Collection, and at St Petersburg, in the Hermitage.) Another is that much-admired, much-reproduced "Muscipula," or "Girl with the Mouse-trap," in the Holland House Collection (Earl of Ilchester), in which that self-conscious, Correggiesque archness and mannerism so often referred to reaches its climax and gives a result closely bordering on the ridiculous. (No. 29 in the Reynolds Exhibition—a repetition in the Marquis of Lansdowne's Collection.)

Belonging to this year, but not, it would seem, included at the time in a public exhibition, is the well-known portrait-group, "Lavinia, Countess Spencer, with her Child, Viscount Althorp," which must count among the President's most gracious and most popular realisations of his favourite type—the beauty presented in her maternal aspect. (This canvas was No. 60 at the Reynolds Exhibition, to which it was lent by Earl Spencer).

On the death of Allan Ramsay this year, shortly after his return from the last journey undertaken to his beloved Italy, Sir Joshua succeeded, almost as a matter of course, to the office of Painter to the King, so long held by the genial Scotchman. Knowing that he was not, and never could become a favourite in the immediate royal circle, he had at first been unwilling to solicit an office which had not been spontaneously offered to him. Having, however, consented—no doubt on the advice of his friends—to comply with the usual routine in the matter, he received the appointment, which, since the reformation of the household by his friend Burke, had been reduced from £200 to £50 per annum. It must have been felt that it could not with any decency be offered to a painter inferior to the President in merit and social standing. Yet his position, with respect to the King and the royal family,

was not materially improved in consequence of this nominal accession of dignity.

Since the paralytic stroke which had momentarily disabled him in the summer of 1783, Dr Johnson's health had steadily declined, and the fits of black gloom and depression from which he had always suffered overwhelmed him more and more. Yet suffering, instead of aggravating his most offensive attributes—the overweening arrogance, the impatience of contradiction, the brutality in argument—softened these asperities, and allowed the intense human side of his character, the love of his friends and dependents, to appear unclouded. He had expressed a dread of passing the winter in England, and a wish to go to Italy. Boswell had been in communication with Lord Chancellor Thurlow as to approaching the King on the subject, and the latter had replied in very obliging fashion, suggesting a conversation with Sir Joshua on the sum to be asked for, and concluding: "It would be a reflection on us all, if such a man should perish for want of the means to take care of his health."

Boswell gives an affecting account of his preliminary interview with the doctor on the subject, which was also the last he was to have with his venerated friend under his own roof. The next day Johnson and Boswell dined alone with Sir Joshua, at the house of the latter, to have the question of the journey out. They endeavoured to flatter the sick man's imagination with agreeable prospects of happiness in Italy, and expressed themselves sanguine that liberal provision would be made for him in one form or another. He himself said he would rather have his pension doubled than a grant of a thousand pounds. There must have been some further delay in the matter, since, in September, Johnson

writes to Boswell a little querulously: "They that have your kindness may lack your ardour,"—a reference, evidently, to Sir Joshua.

As to the exact course which the negotiation afterwards took, there was shown to have been some little misunderstanding. Sir Joshua understood from Lord Thurlow that the application to the King had not been successful, but that Dr Johnson might draw on him (the Chancellor), personally, to the extent of five or six hundred pounds, which he might, if he pleased, treat as a mortgage on the government pension. Johnson, thinking that his health had meanwhile improved, gratefully declined the Chancellor's offer, in a letter enclosed in one addressed in a tone of affectionate regard to Sir Joshua himself. It came out afterwards that Thurlow had not thought the moment opportune to make an official application to the King, but had generously made the offer to Johnson on his own account.

After some further fluctuations in the health of the great writer the end came on the afternoon of December 13th. Though unattended in his last moments by the faithful Boswell, then absent in Scotland, he enjoyed the consolation of seeing round him, in the intervals of his last illness, many of his most attached friends—Burke, Bennet Langton, Sir John Hawkins, Reynolds himself —besides being gratuitously attended, to the last, by some of the most eminent medical and surgical authorities of the time, including Dr Brockelsby and Mr Cruikshank. Sir Joshua was appointed executor, jointly with Sir John Hawkins and Dr William Scott of Doctors Commons, and received as a legacy the testator's great French dictionary by Martinière, and his own copy of the folio English dictionary of the last revision.

It is stated by his biographers that, on his death-

bed, Johnson made three requests to Sir Joshua: never to use his pencil on a Sunday; to read the Bible whenever possible, and always on Sundays; and to forgive him thirty pounds which he had borrowed of him, as he wished to leave the money to a poor family. Sir Joshua very naturally promised, but found himself apparently unable to adhere strictly to that part of the promise which referred to Sunday painting. A few days before his death, Johnson had asked Sir John Hawkins, as one of his executors, where he would be buried; and on receiving the answer, "Doubtless in Westminster Abbey," he seemed, as Boswell says, to feel a satisfaction very natural to a poet. His funeral on December 20th was attended by a respectable number of his friends, including Sir Joshua, Burke, Sir Joseph Banks, Bennet Langton, Windham, Sir Charles Bunbury, and other members of The Club; but it made in other respects a singular contrast to the splendour of that accorded to Garrick, and to the hardly less imposing obsequies with which Reynolds himself was, a few years later, honoured.

The biographers further quote, from a document communicated by Miss Gwatkin, a paper by Sir Joshua on the character of the friend whom he had known intimately and without interruption for a period of upwards of thirty years. This was no doubt written entirely apart from, and without cognisance of, the materials collected by Boswell for his biography, which, be it remembered, did not appear until within a year of Sir Joshua's death. It completely agrees in the main points with the portrait to be evolved from the ever-popular work of the never popular or remarkable biographer, and might almost serve as a synthesis of its main facts and opinions. Sir Joshua's powers of generalisation here serve him admirably, and in truth, are used with a more telling effect,

with a more convincing power, than in many of the Discourses, treating with literary methods of his own art. One passage, as having a very important bearing upon the origin of Sir Joshua's style in literature, and also, to a certain extent, in conversation, must be quoted :—

"We" (Reynolds and the friend to whom the Memoir is addressed) "are both of Dr Johnson's school. For my own part, I acknowledge the highest obligations to him. He may be said to have formed my mind, and to have brushed from it a great deal of rubbish. Those very people whom he has brought to think rightly will occasionally criticise the opinions of their master when he nods. But we should always recollect that it is he himself who taught us and enabled us to do it."

CHAPTER X

Exhibition of 1785—Portrait of Joshua Sharpe—Portrait of John Hunter—Boswell—Walpole and Sir Joshua—Portrait of the Duc d'Orleans (Philippe Egalité)—The "Infant Hercules"—Exhibition of 1786—Triumphant Display by the Master—"Duchess of Devonshire with her Child"—Mrs Montagu again—Malone and the Discourses—"Lady Caroline Price"—Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery—The Grand Style in English Art—Reynolds's "Macbeth"—Exhibition of 1787—"Heads of Angels"—Mrs Fitzherbert—Macklin as a Rival to Boydell—Exhibition of 1788—Lady Elizabeth Foster—Portrait of Lord Heathfield—Reynolds summoned to Gainsborough's Death-bed—"Mrs Billington as St Cecilia"—Boydell honoured at Academy Dinner—Exhibition of 1789—"Simplicity"—"Lord Lifford"—"Mrs Braddyll"—Reynolds's Partial Blindness—The Quarrel with the Royal Academy—The President resigns his Office and Membership—His Defence of his Action—Is induced to resume Office—Exhibition of 1790—Last Portrait of Himself—Last Discourse—Dr Johnson's Monument—Sir Joshua's Last Illness—Miss Burney's Account—Burke's Account—Death on 23d February 1792—Burke's Obituary Notice—Funeral—Will, Legacies, and Bequests—Sales of Pictures, Drawings, etc.

ON the 10th of December 1784, Sir Joshua delivered, at the distribution of the prizes, his Twelfth Discourse.

The sixteen pictures exhibited by the President at the Academy in 1785 did not include any of his more popular masterpieces, and the year may be described as rather a dull one for him.

Among them were:—"The Snake in the Grass," shown as "A Venus;" a group of "Three Children

of the Duke of Rutland," afterwards burnt in the great fire at Belvoir.

The Hon. Mrs Stanhope as "Melancholy."

A portrait of the Prince of Wales, which may possibly be that which passed with the Peel Collection into the National Gallery.

A portrait of Mrs Smith, the *chère amie* of Sir John Lade—(formerly at Peckforton; lent as "Lady Lade" to the Old Masters in 1884 by Baron F. de Rothschild).

A half-length of Lady Hume,* wife of Sir Abraham Hume, holding a spaniel in her lap—(lent by Earl Brownlow to the Reynolds Exhibition in 1884).

Painted in this year, and shown at the exhibition of the next, are two of the most notable among Sir Joshua's male portraits—those happy occasional inspirations in which, presenting with a veritable genius the finest aspects of humanity, he rose to heights upon which even the most fascinating of his female portraits do not sustain him. One is the likeness of the eminent conveyancer, Joshua Sharpe, the other is that of John Hunter. The former half-length, in which the venerable gentleman portrayed appears seated at a table, prominent upon which is a draft conveyance, was No. 168 in the Reynolds Exhibition, to which it was contributed by the late Mr John Malcolm of Poltalloch.†

The famous "John Hunter" is, or rather was, among Reynolds's masterpieces, and must take rank, as a noble, heart-stirring conception, with the "Sir Joseph Banks." Leslie saw it nearly thirty years ago, when it had just been cleaned, repaired and relined, and states that it

* Painted on panel, at the particular request of the lady's husband.

† This portrait had already been referred to in connection with Reynolds's disclaimer of certain praise given to him by the critics for its intellectual qualities.

then looked as it might have looked when fresh from the painter's easel. Alas! if this was then so, it is so no longer, for the canvas has relapsed into a Rembrandtesque gloom, from which not much more than the head and shoulders of the sitter emerge. Those anatomical preparations on the walls, those anatomical plates on the table—here, of the very essence of the subject, and in William Sharp's fine line-engraving almost too clearly depicted—are, in the present state of the picture, rather imagined than seen; so little do they stand out in the Cimmerian darkness which environs the figure. It is from this notable engraving, which admirably conveys, if not the colour and handling of the picture, yet the spirit of the design—it is from the copy painted by John Jackson, R.A., in 1816, and now in the National Portrait Gallery—that we can best appreciate what the "John Hunter" was when first painted.

Still, we must by no means fail to examine the canvas itself, as it hangs at the Royal College of Surgeons, in the company, *inter alios minores*, of a "William Hunter," by Zoffany—playing for once at Sir Joshua—and a superb, if a little conventional, "Sir Astley Cooper," by Sir Thomas Lawrence.

In this unexaggerated presentment of the great Scotch surgeon and physiologist without flourish or pretence—his homely features in nowise beautified, his small figure not a whit broadened or idealised—Sir Joshua has, for once, almost attained to the sublime, and that by the simplest means, with no violence to the realism appropriate to the subject, with as little of the Michelangelesque in the exterior aspect of his figure as could well be. As John Hunter sits thus quietly musing in his study, in a moment of suspense which may have as its outcome the recognition of some great connecting link, the revelation of some unrecognised truth, we seem to see a modern

prophet—the Prophet of Science; and the epithet "sublime," in connection with the homely portrait of a Scotch doctor, appears not too greatly to offend the modesty of truth. Retaining nothing of the contours of those vast creations in the Sixtine Chapel, Reynolds has yet altogether naturally given his quiet figure a pose which suggests, less in design than in spirit, the prophets of Buonarroti, and of Raphael following him; and in so doing, aided by nature, and inspired by an intuitive if not a wholly conscious insight, he has produced a great work—as great in its simplicity as his attempts at the conventionally heroic and the conventionally ideal are inflated and empty.

We find Boswell, in a letter addressed to Sir Joshua, proposing in flattering terms that his friend should paint his picture for the family place at Auchinleck; but adding the less enticing condition that it was to be paid for "out of the first fees which I receive as barrister in Westminster Hall; or, if that fund should fail, it shall be paid, at any rate, five years hence, by myself or my representatives." The outcome of this arrangement was the often-reproduced but not very notable portrait now in the Peel Collection at the National Gallery.

Walpole writes, on June 20th, 1788, to the Countess of Ossory:—

"I am not quite in charity with Sir Joshua; he desired to come and see my marvellous 'Henry VII.;' when he saw it he said: 'It is in the old, hard, Flemish manner.' For hard, it is so bold that it is one of the great reasons for doubting its antiquity; and for Flemish there is nothing Flemish in it, except a *chiaroscuro* as masterly as Rubens; but it is not surprising that Sir Joshua should dislike colouring that has lasted so long."

Between the painter's blame and the dilettante's praise it is a little difficult to gather what manner of picture the "marvellous Henry VII." may have been. If it was genuine, it must have been, as Sir Joshua surmised, a Netherlandish, or perhaps a German, work of the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century; and for this type of art, Horace Walpole — in this respect in advance of a time which recognised little perfection before the maturity of the sixteenth century—had far greater sympathy, if not a more accurate knowledge, than the accomplished President pretended to.

The Duc d'Orléans, this year paying one of his numerous visits to England, sat to Sir Joshua for a full-length, destined for the Prince of Wales, and for which he paid 250 guineas. He was then chiefly known as an *Anglomane*, an imitator of what was least attractive in the habits and manners of the sporting section of English society. He was afterwards to mature into the Philippe Egalité of 1793; the traitor and renegade who helped to do to death the hapless king, his cousin, with the infamous "*La mort!*" pronounced in the Convention during the fatal sitting at which Louis XVI. was condemned; who, a few months afterwards, was himself swallowed, an unpitied victim, by the all-devouring maw of the Terror.

Sir Joshua painted Monseigneur in a hussar uniform, cap in hand, with a servant holding his horse, as may be seen in John Raphael Smith's mezzotint, now the best record of the original, which was burnt in the fire at Carlton House. It does not appear to be very generally known that the original portrait, restored as well as might be, considering the irreparable nature of its injuries, now hangs in an obscure closet in the Hampton Court Gallery. The master, with a realism doubly commendable

under the circumstances, did not scruple to portray the princely sitter with the bloated face which he owed to his worship of *la dive bouteille;* but made his picture attractive, nevertheless, by the ease and natural stateliness of the attitude—qualities which, according to the painter, he owed to the Orléans prince himself, whose manner of posing he especially commended. It is on record that the Duke was one of the guests at the Academy dinner of 1786, and on that occasion sat under his own portrait.

This year we again hear of Sir Joshua in Flanders, laying out no less than £1000 on pictures publicly sold at Brussels by order of the Emperor Joseph. This would make in all no less than three excursions to the Low Countries; but Tom Taylor has conjectured, not without reason, that the journey in 1783 did not really take place, but may have been duplicated by mistake out of this well-authenticated one of 1785.

In this year, Sir Joshua, no doubt through the good graces of the Princess Dashkoff, whom he had known in England at the time of her exile, had obtained a splendid commission from the Empress Catherine of Russia. This was an order to paint a historical picture, the subject to be left to his own choice; and he had at first been undetermined what theme to choose that should be worthy of the occasion. That ultimately decided upon—it must surely have been suggested to Sir Joshua by some of his literary or learned friends—was the legend (after Theocritus) of the Infant Hercules strangling the Serpents—an allusion, we are told, to the already preponderant strength of the youthful empire, and its proved ability to crush all conspiracies against it. The great Empress must have been well pleased with the subject and its execution, since she not only paid for her picture the then unparalleled price of

1500 guineas, but presented to Sir Joshua a golden snuff-box, with her cipher in brilliants.

The central figure of the Infant Hercules, bedded on wolf-skins in a cradle of classic mould, lusty in aspect, exuberant already in strength, is a conception of undeniable power; but the work, as a whole, adds, it must be owned, but one more to the ambitious failures of the master in the domain of the grand style, though it ranks, after the "Ugolino," as one of the more honourable among these. The composition, if fairly well balanced and put together, and both thought out and wrought out with evident care, is, to the last degree, artificial, forced and rhetorical in its passion—pure Bolognese in fact, and Bolognese not of the best quality. As a model for the blind Teiresias, Reynolds took, it is said, the head of Johnson, without the wig—that which was at the Academy in 1770, and is now at Knole.

If Horace Walpole indeed suggested to Sir Joshua, as an historical subject, in lieu of that actually carried out, the Czar Peter at Deptford, putting on the ship-carpenter's dress before setting to work in the dockyard, he showed himself, in this particular, able to take up a standpoint other than that of his time. But such a subject could according to no then accepted canon of art be deemed an historical one; and it is more than likely that the Empress, notwithstanding her vigorous good sense and lack of conventionality, would have declined to accept it as a fulfilment of her commission. Moreover, genre-like treatment would, to a certain extent, have been indispensable, and Reynolds could not have supplied this; nor could West, for all his unconventional "Death of Wolfe." Perhaps the Hogarthian Zoffany might have done so; but would his humorous, unflattering realism have been acceptable?

An original repetition of part of the "Infant Hercules"—the central motive only, with the rotund hero *en herbe*—belongs to Earl Fitzwilliam, and was by him contributed to the Reynolds Exhibition. Yet another similar repetition appeared at the same gathering of the master's works as the property of Lord Northwick.

The Royal Academy Exhibition of 1786 must have been a triumph for Sir Joshua, since among the thirteen pictures with which he once more asserted his supremacy were the "Duke of Orleans;" the "John Hunter;" the "Joshua Sharpe;" and the ever-popular "Duchess of Devonshire playing with her Infant Daughter," than which hardly any work of the artist enjoys a larger measure of public favour.

The fashionable beauty, still charming, though the fulness of her form verges already upon *embonpoint*, sits, dressed in black satin, on a sofa, engaged in a vigorous game of play with the little Georgina Dorothy (afterwards Countess of Carlisle). There is some questionable drawing in the upraised arms of the infant, and the action of the mother is superficially effective, rather than really suggestive or truthful. To these defects, however, the vivacity of the conception, the richness of the colour, the brilliant facility of the execution, blind the spectator, who is content to abide by the first general impression. The picture was lent by the Duke of Devonshire to the Reynolds Exhibition, and was again seen by the public in 1892 at the Guildhall.

Other contributions made by the President to the exhibition were:—

A portrait of a Young Gentleman.

A portrait of Mr Erskine.

Two Children of Lady Lucan.

Lady Taylor.

John Lee, in his robes as Solicitor-General.

Lavinia, Countess Spencer ;* the charming portrait in a large straw hat shading the upper part of her face—engraved by Bartolozzi in 1787—a true and a most fascinating Sir Joshua.

A full-length of a Gentleman.

Miss Anne Bingham,† sister of Lady Spencer—in a large straw hat like that worn by her sister.

"The Guardian Angel," showing an infant asleep in the arms of an elder child (or angel?); while an angel encircles both of them with his arms and protecting plumes, (lent by the Duke of Leeds to the Reynolds Exhibition, where it was No. 36).

Disintegration and decay had been at work diminishing the circle of the Blue Stockings, from whom the social supremacy, so long maintained, was now slipping away. Age and infirmity had disabled Mrs Vesey; the marriage of Mrs Thrale, in 1784, to the singing-master Piozzi had caused her ostracism, amid a chorus of general execration; but Mrs Montagu, veteran ruler of the set, was, as Walpole wrote to the Miss Berrys a little later on, *toujours sur la brèche.* Always inclined to estimate at their proper value the intellectualities of the sisterhood, he had written in the September of the preceding year to the Countess of Ossory :—

"Dr Burney and his daughter, Evelina Cecilia, have passed a day and a half with me; she half-and-half sense and modesty, which possesses her so entirely that not a cranny is left for affectation or pretension. Oh! Mrs Montagu, you are not above half as accomplished."

* No. 124, at the Reynolds Exhibition, to which it was lent by Earl Spencer.

† No. 112 at the Reynolds Exhibition, to which it was lent by the same owner.

The indefatigable lady had, however, besides her energy, her great wealth to support her, as well as the attractions, a few years later, of the splendid mansion, constructed for her by Adams in Portman Square, and decorated with the aid of Cipriani and Angelica Kauffmann.* This she inaugurated, in 1791, with a mighty breakfast to 700 persons, the great novelty being the opening of the room with feather hangings—an idea borrowed from the South Sea Islands, which was greeted with much applause. We are left to wonder whether, after all, in this primitive mode of decoration is unconsciously revealed the true taste of the sententious Queen Blue?

Mrs Piozzi was this year before the public with her *Anecdotes and Letters of Johnson*, ruthlessly commented upon by her old enemy Baretti, and in a few years to be obliterated by the world-famous biography of the man whom, in a letter to Mrs Montagu, she is pleased to style "a jackanapes who has lately made a noise here, one Boswell, by anecdotes of Dr Johnson." To her book we owe, at any rate, Peter Pindar's amusing *Town Eclogues*, in which the rival Johnsonians, Bozzy and Piozzi, contend, in a sort of *Sängerkampf*, for the palm of anecdote.

In connection with the President's Thirteenth Discourse, delivered on the 10th of December, it is interesting to read the letter addressed by him to Malone — first made public in Cotton's *Sir Joshua Reynolds*—since it enables us to estimate the nature and extent of the help which the master may have received in elaborating his lectures into their actual literary form :—

* This is the tradition; but Angelica Kauffmann was not in England at the time, and could at the most have contributed the designs.

December 15th, 1786.

"My dear Sir,—I wish you would just run your eye over my Discourse, if you are not too much busied in what you have made your own employment. I wish that you would do more than merely look at it—that you would examine it with a critical eye in regard to grammatical correctness, the propriety of expression and the truth of the observations. J. Reynolds."

Above all, it is important to note here that the help of Malone is sought after the Discourse has been delivered, and, therefore, only to perfect its literary shape, to clear away any obvious discrepancies before publication. Malone himself owns that he revised in this fashion four Discourses—presumably the four last.

It may be recollected that Dr Johnson had indignantly denied any serious participation in them, strenuously affirming the matter to be all Sir Joshua's own; but it is not unfair or derogatory to our master to imagine the lexicographer, in similar fashion, making some verbal re-touches in the already Johnsonian periods of his friend and admirer.

One of the last pictures painted by Reynolds, in 1786, was the striking and somewhat unusual portrait of Lady Caroline Price (wife of Sir T. Uvedale Price, and daughter of the Earl of Tyrconnel), which reappeared in 1893 in the Price sale at Christie's, so brilliantly fresh in colour as a little to disconcert the admirers of the classic, smoked and darkened Reynolds, with its tawny shadows and bituminous depths.

On a ground of scarlet, broken with a deeper red, the vivacious lady stands out, dressed in black satin, with freshly-powdered hair and a knot of brightest azure in her waistband, seeming to pass swiftly by the spectator, so momentary and full of life is the design. That a master in

the sedate maturity of sixty-three years should paint so superbly is perhaps not surprising, but that he should paint with so unquenched, nay, even enhanced, a vivacity is certainly a subject for wonder.

His future biographer, Edmund Malone, was also painted, by Sir Joshua in 1786, and this simply-conceived half-length, painted with rich brown shadows, in a golden tone, is quite typical of its period in the master's practice. Having been bequeathed by Malone himself to his elder brother, Lord Sunderlin, it finally passed into the possession of Mr William Agnew, and, after having been shown at the Reynolds Exhibition (where it was No. 148), was presented by him, with other portraits by Sir Joshua, to the National Portrait Gallery.

It was in November 1786 that Alderman Boydell, the print-publisher, started the project for his celebrated Shakespeare Gallery, undertaken not more from the hope of profit than with the genuine desire to develop English art in the neglected and misunderstood branches of the historical and the ideal. The plan was that commissions should be given to all the prominent artists of the day to paint a series of pictures illustrating the most important scenes and characters in the plays, and that these should be reproduced, by the best engravers, for a grand edition of the poet, to be brought out in numbers spaced over a period of twelve years. The gallery built in Pall Mall to exhibit the pictures was that which afterwards became celebrated as the British Institution.

The attempt to create—one cannot say to resuscitate—national art of this type was, no doubt, a generous, high-hearted one, but it had, from the first, no reasonable hope of success. Monumental, decorative, and historical art, unlike portraiture and genre, had never risen from a

permanent basis, or obtained a firm hold in England, where the decorations of Verrio at Hampton Court and Windsor, of Sir James Thornhill in the dome of St Paul's and at Greenwich, remained as models of what to avoid rather than to imitate.

The art of the seventeenth century in France might be conventional, and freezing cold in its adaptation of Italian formulæ; that which the succeeding century developed there might, with all its decorative brilliancy, be too superficial and too frivolous to be held forth as an example. But, at any rate, both were consummate of their kind, perfectly suited to the constructions which they were devised to adorn, and elaborated according to certain well-understood if, indeed by our present standard, unduly conventional methods.

Well might Walpole, though he must have seemed to his more optimistic contemporaries to overact the part of "*Der Geist der stets verneint*," cry out:—

"Mercy on us, *our* painters to design from Shakespeare! His *commentators* have not been more inadequate. Pray, who is to give an idea of Falstaff, now Quin is dead? And then Bartolozzi, who is only fit to engrave for the *Pastor Fido*, will be to give a pretty enamelled fan-mount of a Macbeth! Salvator Rosa might; and Piranesi might dash out Duncan's Castle; but Lord help Alderman Boydell and the Royal Academy!"

This is only another way of putting the unquestionable truth that the art of the period lacked not only the experience adequately to realise its conceptions in the grand style, but imagination—such as, later on, cannot be denied to the Romantics—to conceive anew the great subjects attempted. It is quite possible to admire the

pluck and generosity of Boydell, and yet to deplore that his enterprise, besides bringing him to the verge of ruin, served, not to develop English art in the desired direction—since the basis for such a development was wholly lacking—but to show too convincingly the bareness of the land.

To Romney, his biographer, Hayley, ascribes the credit of having, in the course of a conversation with Alderman Boydell at his house in Cavendish Square made the first suggestion out of which grew the vast and costly enterprise. We learn that the imagination had been fired by the Empress Catherine's commission to Reynolds to paint an historical picture, and that he named to the enterprising print-seller a rate of payment for his co-operation, so low, that the latter did not dare to propose it to West, Copley, or Sir Joshua.

Not much is to be gained by analysing Reynolds's "Macbeth," well known through more than one reproduction; there is an element of fustian in the passion, of cheapness in the sublimity, a general failure to hit the mark, which, apart from technical shortcomings, places the work on an infinitely lower level than his portraiture, and gives it no higher rank, indeed, than that of the mediocrities which made up the major part of Boydell's commissioned work. Less impressive still is the "Death of Cardinal Beaufort" (now with the "Macbeth" at Petworth), if we except the head of the Cardinal himself, grinning a ghastly grin as he bites his pillows in the agonies of dissolution. Here Reynolds has manifestly been inspired by the figures of the damned in the "Last Judgment" of his Michelangelo. With the "Puck"—the ever-popular figure seated on the toadstool, which is so universally known that any description of it would be superfluous—Sir Joshua, of course, succeeded better.

With a humorous fantasy such as this—a worthy successor to the "Mercury" and "Cupid as a Link-boy"—he was thoroughly at home, and, moreover, in harmony with the master-spirit whom it was his pleasing task to interpret; and this time to interpret adequately.

Of the many artists selected by Alderman Boydell for his great enterprise—included among whom were, besides Sir Joshua himself, Romney, Opie, West, Fuseli, Barry, Stothard, Smirke, Wright of Derby, Angelica Kauffmann, Westall, and Hamilton—perhaps the most successful was Opie, whose work, with all its over-accentuation and exaggeration, had genuine dramatic qualities, together with a certain element of weighty dignity and style, which were lacking in the performances of his brother Shakespearians.

The President's contribution of thirteen pictures to the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1787 showed him still at the zenith of his powers, especially as the painter of children. Of his unapproached supremacy in this branch of his practice, several pictures in the exhibition afforded conclusive evidence.

The "Lady Smyth and her Children" almost rivals in charm the "Lady Cockburn and her Children," but is less well grouped. Then we have "Lady St Asaph and her Child;" and the engaging, but too self-consciously arcadian, "Lord Burghersh"—a pretty child chasing a butterfly, hat in hand.

Superior to all these in popularity is the famous "Heads of Angels," then called "A Cherub-head in different Views"—in reality a group of studies from the head of a little girl, Frances Isabella, the daughter of Lord and Lady William Gordon. This is a work the loveliness of which has been not a little cheapened and obscured by frequent copies and reproductions, in which the delicate essence of the

original has been allowed to evaporate; but a glance at the picture itself, as it hangs in the National Gallery (to which it was presented in 1841 by Lady William Gordon), dispels the *ennui* with which we approach it, and renews the magic spell of the master.

Hardly less beautiful, or less popular, is the "Master Philip Yorke"—the full-length of a curly-haired child in a white frock, with a robin perched on its arm, begging for which a pet dog looks up beseechingly into its baby-master's face.* This is just on the boundary between the thoroughly sincere and unaffected pictures of children, of which many examples have been furnished, and those of more questionable and artificial fascination, such as the "Muscipula," the "Robinetta," etc. This last-named study of a red-haired girl with a robin resting on her shoulder, may very probably belong to about this time, since its fellow—but slightly varied—was engraved by T. Jones in 1787. There is no note, it would seem, of its exhibition until it passed, with the Peel Collection, into the National Gallery.

Even more foolishly named than this is so-called "Felina," exhibited in 1788 at the Academy as "Girl with a Kitten," so that we may, in this case, as in many others, absolve Sir Joshua, and make his publisher or engraver answerable for the grotesque affectation and the misfit of the title. It is, by a slip, described by Leslie and Taylor (Vol. II. p. 516) as having been engraved as "Muscipula." The version of this picture, belonging to Lord Feversham, was No. 92 at the Reynolds Exhibition; another version belongs to Lord Normanton.

The other canvases exhibited by the President in 1787 were:—The full-length of the Prince of Wales in Garter robes, with a black servant arranging his dress—a motive

* Now in the collection of Lord Iveagh.

suggested, no doubt, by these portraits of Van Dyck in which the copper-skinned page forms an important element of colour.

Portraits of Mrs Hope, the Hon. Mrs Stanhope, Lady Cadogan, and Lady Elliot.

The portrait of one of Sir Joshua's new friends, the youthful dilettante, Sir Harry Englefield—much admired by Horace Walpole.

The unfortunate Mrs Fitzherbert had given sittings to Sir Joshua in 1786, at the time when her royal lover, the Prince of Wales, was also being painted, and she sat to him again in 1788. Her portrait was not, however, exhibited. It was in 1787 that the Prince, with characteristic meanness, authorised Fox to give an explicit denial in the House to his marriage with the lady—a denial which she is said to have been induced, under pressure, to authorise. Gillray's characteristic sledge-hammer caricatures on the delicate subject are well known. The one shows the Prince's mistress—or wife—as "Dido Forsaken"—her crown and royal insignia blown from her head by a blast from the lips of Fox. The other —"Wife and no Wife"—depicts in grotesque fashion the wedding ceremony.

The charming unfinished half-length by Sir Joshua, in which Mrs Fitzherbert appears in a white dress with a black band on her sleeve, must belong to one of these two years. It was contributed by Lord Portarlington to the Guelph Exhibition, at which also appeared Gainsborough's better known and, perhaps, more characteristic portrait, lent by Lord Fortescue. Lord Portarlington also showed on the same occasion a singularly beautiful collection of miniatures, once the property of the lady, and including several of herself and of the Prince of Wales.

Fired by the distinction achieved by Alderman Boydell with his new and sumptuous edition of Shakespeare, and the Shakespeare gallery connected with it, Macklin, a rival publisher, planned an *Illustrated Bible*, intended to be on an even more imposing scale than the Shakespeare of the enterprising Alderman. Under these circumstances he, as a matter of course, deemed the prestige conferred by the President's name indispensable to his undertaking, and proceeded to make terms with him, as the results show, not for sacred works only.

Of Sir Joshua Macklin accordingly obtained "Tuccia the Vestal Virgin," an illustration to Gregory's "Ode to Meditation," and the "Holy Family," now in the National Gallery.* This is a well-grouped and not unpleasing piece, giving an adaptation of the suave style by which Raphael replaced the intenser and more natural pathos of the fifteenth century, but it has about it also a flavour of the Bolognese manner, which not infrequently coloured the master's attempts in the direction of religious and ideal art. The most expensive canvas acquired by Macklin was that variously known as "Macklin's Family Picture," "The Gleaners," and "The Cottagers" — a pseudo-idyllic piece, in which the publisher's wife and daughter are depicted seated, while a Miss Potts (after Mrs Landseer) appears standing with a sheaf of corn on her head. It is altogether an unconvincing scene of Arcadian bliss, suggestive rather of Gainsborough, without his vivacity, or of a Morland magnified, than of Sir Joshua himself. This painting was last seen in public at the Reynolds Exhibition, to which it was contributed by Mr Robert Gosling.

Walpole writing, a couple of years later (September 21st, 1790), to Sir David Dalrymple of the two galleries, says :—

* Presented by the Directors of the British Institution.

"I am entirely of your opinion, Sir, that two of Northcote's pictures, from *King John* and *Richard III.* are at the head of the collection. In Macklin's Gallery of Poets and Scripture there are much better pictures than at Boydell's. Opie's 'Jephthah's Vow,' is a truly fine performance, and would be so in any assemblage of paintings as Sir Joshua's 'Death of Beaufort' (at Boydell's) is worthy of none. . . . ."

To the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1788, Reynolds sent no less than eighteen pictures, among which are several of his best known works:—

The "Infant Hercules," for the Empress Catherine, which has been discussed at an earlier stage.

The "Girl with a Kitten" ("Felina").

A "Girl Sleeping."

Portrait of "Lady Elizabeth Foster"—showing the future Duchess of Devonshire with lightly powdered hair, in a white muslin dress and blue sash. This has a distinction and charm unsurpassed by any similar performance of the artist; it is, moreover, exceptional, as approaching somewhat nearly, in its silveriness of tone and peculiarity of handling, to Gainsborough's style. Here we have the too attractive widow of whom Gibbon said "that no man could withstand her, and that, if she chose to beckon the Lord Chancellor from his woolsack, in full sight of the world, he could not refuse obedience." She was the intimate, but scarcely in the true construction of the word, the friend of the brilliant Georgiana, and after her death became Duchess of Devonshire in her stead. There exists a crayon drawing by that most piquant and Reynolds-like of draughtsmen, Downman, showing the two famous ladies together. Of the exuberant physical charm of the first Duchess Lady Elizabeth

had little, but she more than replaced it by a subtle fascination, the potency of which, by way of contrast, it is easy to understand.

The noble "Portrait of Lord Heathfield" * is still one of Reynolds's greatest glories, although a comparison with Earlom's fine mezzotint shows how much it has lost in firmness of accent since it was engraved. The picture has formed part of the National Collection ever since it was purchased, with the rest of the Angerstein pictures, in 1824.

No mere exhibition of dramatic gesticulation, no martial fire and fury, could convey with so intense a dramatic force as do the simple, steadfast attitude, the composed and thoroughly British expression of the hero, what was the true personality of the man, the true character of the heroic resistance by which he immortalised himself. He grasps the great key of the fortress of Gibraltar with a quiet resolution that nothing can shake; the view of the rock in the background, half-obscured by the smoke of artillery, just sufficiently marks the moment, and the environment in which Sir Joshua has chosen to represent his hero. This is the last, and certainly not the least, of those virile and intellectually powerful portraits of notable men which are — whatever the picture-dealer and the millionaire connoisseur may think of it—Reynolds's highest achievement and his greatest glory. It has been maintained more than once in these pages, but it cannot be too often repeated, that those who demand for Sir Joshua the first place among the portrait-painters of England should support their claim with the aid of the "Garrick," the "Johnson," the "Gibbon," the "Baretti," the "Sir Joseph Banks," the "John Hunter," the "Lord Heathfield," in preference even to such works as the "Lady Cock-

* Painted in 1787 for Alderman Boydell.

burn," the "Ladies Waldegrave," the "Mrs Braddyll," nay, the very "Tragic Muse" herself.

The other pictures making up Sir Joshua's display in 1788 were:—The portraits of Lord Sheffield, Mr Wyndham of Felbridge, the Duke of York (now in St James's Palace); Sir George Beaumont (No. 8 in the Reynolds Exhibition); Mrs Drummond Smith, Master Stanhope, Colonel Morgan, Colonel Bertie, Lord Grantham and his brothers, Lady Harris, Lord Darnley, Miss Gideon and her brother, Mr Braddyll.

There are few more touching incidents in the whole history of art and artists than the final meeting of Gainsborough and Reynolds at the death-bed of the former. Gainsborough was dying of some ailment then called a cancer, but which may perhaps have been a carbuncle on the neck—developed, as he imagined, from a chill caught while he stood in a draught on the great occasion of the impeachment of Warren Hastings. It has been seen that no further intercourse had taken place between the great competitors, whom we must not call brother-artists, since the abortive attempt made by Gainsborough to paint the President's portrait. What we know of the final interview is derived from Sir Joshua's Fourteenth Discourse, delivered, according to custom, in the month December of the year, and mainly devoted to a just and discriminating, if not absolutely an enthusiastic panegyric of Gainsborough's art:—

"A few days before he died," says Reynolds, "he wrote me a letter to express his acknowledgments for the good opinion I entertained of his abilities, and the manner in which (he had been informed) I always spoke of him; and desired he might see me once more before he died. I am aware how flattering it is to myself to be

thus connected with the dying testimony which this excellent painter bore to his art. But I cannot prevail on myself to suppress that I was not connected with him by any habits of familiarity; if any little jealousies had subsisted between us, they were forgotten in those moments of sincerity, and he turned towards me as one who was engrossed by the same pursuits, and who deserved his good opinion by being sensible of his excellence.

"Without entering into a detail of what passed at this interview, the impression of it upon my mind was that his regret at losing life was principally the regret of leaving his art; and more especially as he now began, he said, to see what his deficiencies were; which, he said, he flattered himself in his last works were in some measure supplied."

It is surely permissible to read here a little between the lines, and to imagine for ourselves how it was that Gainsborough, often passionate, wrong-headed, jealous —as his dealings with the Academy and with Reynolds himself show — but yet thoroughly human in the finest sense of the word, came at this supreme moment to review and repent his attitude towards the serene, the invulnerable Sir Joshua, whose conduct towards him had been throughout absolutely correct—nay, even generous.

More must have passed at this final interview than Reynolds, true to his gentlemanly instincts, has chosen to reveal to the world in the carefully-balanced, if somewhat faintly-coloured, phraseology of his Discourse. We admire the absolute fairness, the irreproachable attitude of our master in so trying a situation, and the unexaggerated, the perfectly sincere praise bestowed upon his deceased rival. Yet, as usual, the note of true emotion is not struck, and Sir Joshua does not—if it

is fair to form an estimate from the materials before us — appear, even from the merely dramatic point of view, to have been fully alive to the pathos of the situation. Our heart goes out to the repentant Gainsborough, who must surely have whispered (or wished to whisper) other things into the ear of excellent, forgiving Sir Joshua than the polite speeches, the admirable generalities about art which are all that the latter thought himself at liberty to repeat. Our love and sympathy go to the prodigal returned, rather than to the just man who has deviated not a hair's-breadth from the straight path.

At the funeral, which took place at Kew, Sir Joshua was one of the pall-bearers, the others being Sir William Chambers, West, Bartolozzi, Paul Sandby, and Samuel Cotes.

The following year, 1789, saw the furious, unseemly battle of the Regency over the poor, distraught King, which, perhaps, more than any other contemporary question, divided not only professional politicians but society in general. Sir Joshua, however much, notwithstanding the whig proclivities which had coloured his whole career, he may have chosen to remain neutral, must have heard all around him—in the clubs, the drawing-rooms, even in his own painting-room—the din of combat.

Two brilliant luminaries of the stage—the one, Mrs Jordon, the bright, particular star of comedy, the other, Mrs Billington, the most renowned of English operatic singers—are mentioned as visitors to Leicester Fields in the early part of this year. Mrs Jordan, as vivacious, as bewitching as Mrs Abington herself had been in the earlier stage of her career, does not appear to have been painted by Sir Joshua, but only to have paid him a flying visit. She is almost as much associated with Romney as

Lady Hamilton herself; and no more fascinating record of her vivacious beauty could be desired than the half-length by that painter, showing her as "Peggy," in the "Country Girl," the original of which is in the collection of Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild. Mrs Billington, whom we claim as English, although her maiden name, Weichsel, betokens a foreign origin, was, perhaps, the only prima donna of home growth who, in the palmiest days of Italian opera, victoriously competed with Italian singers on their own ground, and in their own theatres. Sir Joshua has presented her as Saint Cecilia, environed by a bevy of angels who accompany her singing—a conception very different from that of Raphael, who makes the Saint herself hush her voice and sink her instrument as she listens, rapt, to the heavenly choir. There could not well be here the same intimate connection between model and subject as there was in the great "Mrs Siddons as the Tragic Muse;" and so Mrs Billington remains Mrs Billington, the fair, the rather exuberant mortal, posing with a decorative accompaniment of angels, while Mrs Siddons naturally becomes, what Sir Joshua bade her be, the Tragic Muse.

The "Mrs Billington as St Cecilia" now adorns the New York Museum. A head of the famous *cantatrice*, painted somewhere about 1786, was lent by the Earl of Normanton in 1885 to the Old Masters Exhibition.

On the 23d of April, Sir Joshua had to attend, as President of the Royal Academy, the great Thanksgiving Service for the restoration of King George to health. Congratulatory addresses to the King and Queen, drawn up by the President, had been adopted, and were most fairly written out by the renowned calligrapher of the day, Mr Tomkins, who was paid fifty guineas for his pains: the addresses were duly presented and graciously

received. It was this same year that the "famous Mr Tomkins" was portrayed by Sir Joshua.

An inspiriting scene marks the Academy dinner of 1789, and shows Burke as noble and passionate in enthusiasm, as genuinely anxious to promote the interests of art as when, years before, he had, in such disinterested fashion, helped on Barry in the initial steps of his career. Seeing Alderman Boydell, then prominently before the public in connection with the newly-launched Shakespeare Gallery, at one of the tables, Burke writes on a slip of paper, which he sends up to the President: "This end of the table, at which, as there are many admirers of the art there are many friends of yours, wish to drink an English tradesman who patronizes the art better than the Grand Monarque of France—Alderman Boydell, the Commercial Mæcenas!" The toast was proposed and duly honoured amid great applause, and the high-hearted publisher may well to his dying day have treasured up the memory of the tribute of enthusiastic recognition thus paid him. To-day, though social demarcations are far fainter and less difficult for merit to overpass them then, such a toast, coming straight from the heart of the proposer, and going as straight to that of the listeners, would, amid the conventional and highly-studied oratorical graces, which are the rule, surprise and perhaps a little disconcert the brilliant company by which the Academy loves to surround itself on this special occasion.

This was the last exhibition at which Sir Joshua exhibited in full strength, and the group of works then brought forward by him was curiously representative, as well of his transcendent merits as of his weaknesses and mannerisms. At any rate, not from any one of the canvases shown could be inferred a falling-off from the painter's standard in work of the class to which it belonged.

Among the works of the imagination are:—

The "Robin Goodfellow" (Puck), already described in connection with the Shakespeare Gallery.

"Cupid and Psyche"*—the scene in which the imprudent mortal, holding a lamp, gazes at the unveiled form of her immortal lover. This is, not so much in design as in general conception, a reminiscence of Correggio, but a reminiscence such as a Bolognese eclectic might have produced. It is difficult, darkened and obscured as it now is, to conceive that it could ever have appeared "glaring" to Horace Walpole.

The "Continence of Scipio" is another of those "high-art" subjects, in which the weakness rather than the strength of the master is displayed. It was purchased by the Empress Catherine, and is now in the imperial gallery of the Hermitage with the "Infant Hercules," and one of the repetitions of the "Snake in the Grass" in the National Gallery.†

The "Cymon and Iphigenia"—afterwards presented by Sir Joshua's niece, the Marchioness of Thomond, to George IV., and now in the royal collection. This hovers in treatment midway between the Venetians and Rubens, and is not devoid of a touch of the coarseness of the latter.

Most popular among the master's contributions to the year's pictures has remained, however, the lovely "Simplicity"‡—a portrait of the little Theophila Gwatkin,

* Lent by the Baroness Burdett-Coutts to the Old Masters in 1893.

† The only other public galleries on the Continent which possess examples of Sir Joshua's art are the National (formerly Esterhazy) Gallery of Buda-Pesth, and the Uffizi of Florence. The private Czernin Gallery in Vienna includes a "General Abercrombie" attributed to Sir Joshua, and the Königswarter collection in the same city one of the numerous portraits of the master by himself, in academic robes, and a "Countess of Carnarvon."

‡ One version is now in the collection of Baron F. de Rothschild.

daughter of "Offie," and great-niece of the painter. This, for tenderness and beauty, may rank with the "Angels' Heads" in the National Collection. The original version shown on this occasion was painted for the family. The writer is unable to state whether this was the picture contributed to the Old Masters in 1880 by Mrs F. C. Aylmer, or whether the latter was the repetition mentioned by Leslie and Taylor as being in the possession of Mrs Lane, who, it appears, claimed for it, as the altered version, the exclusive right to the title "Simplicity." *

Among the other portraits was the splendid one of Richard Brinsley Sheridan—one of the most striking achievements of the master in male portraiture, and deserving of the unstinted praise which Walpole, putting aside his critical mood, lavished upon it.

Besides these canvases should be mentioned portraits of Lord Rodney, Lord Henry Fitzgerald, Lord Vernon, and the Hon. Mrs Watson.

Sir Joshua has not produced a more audaciously realistic piece of portraiture than the full-length of Lord Lifford, Chancellor of Ireland, seated, portentously bewigged, in his gold-laced official robes, with the great seal beside him. The robes and accessories are painted with unusual force and brilliancy, and were most probably worked upon by the painter himself after they had been laid in by the brush of an assistant. It is, however, in presenting the far from engaging physiognomy and the profoundly bored expression of his sitter that the master has dared most, and most succeeded. He indulges here in an almost cruel adherence to truth, as even the gentle Van Dyck, when left to himself, would on some rare occasions do.

* With, though after, the "Simplicity" may be classed the charming and hardly less popular "Penelope Boothby," painted in 1788.

One of the very last and one of the loveliest productions of our master's brush is the "Mrs Braddyll," which was not exhibited at the Academy, where, a year before, her husband's picture had appeared—in all probability because it was not sufficiently finished to be shown. More than one reproduction has made familiar the fair, high-bred face of the lady, who sits, wearing her hair most elaborately curled and powdered, in a white dress and black mantle, supporting her head on her hand with a composure which, by its serenity, just escapes being disdainful. The picture, which now belongs to Lady Wallace, and is in the collection at Manchester House, was lent by its owner to the Old Masters in 1892. It reveals, even more completely, what has already been noted in connection with the "Ladies Waldegrave"—in what slightness of modelling and handling the veteran master can, at the close of his great career, permit himself to indulge, without materially impairing the effects aimed at. Lovers of a Vandyck-like thoroughness of draughtsmanship and modelling may, perhaps, feel inclined to reproach him with a lack of solidity, coming near to, yet not reaching, flimsiness; but his mastery in this, his latest style, must be manifest to all.

Save that the sunshine of the royal favour never, even at this the official period of Sir Joshua's career, shone full upon him, he had, up to this advanced period of his life, sailed the voyage of life on fair seas, and enjoyed a prosperity so unbroken that he might well, like the Greek tyrant, have sacrificed his most precious possession to appease the jealous anger of the divinities. But now came the decline into the vale of tears, the gradual lowering of the heavy canopy of cloud which was in the end to overshadow, with its load of physical suffering and mental depression, the sympathetic personality of the man, and

to quench that splendid pictorial power which had been the pride of successive generations.

If Sir Joshua had not the ardent, simple faith which upheld Johnson, and prevented him from falling utterly a defenceless prey to his black despairs, he had, to sustain him, the unfailing serenity, the power of momentarily shaking off trouble, which had been his main characteristic through life. This was the cause that the last years of his life were not, after all, except at the very close, as uniformly sad as they might well have been, seeing that the affliction most terrible of all to the master of the brush was to visit him.

In July of this year, while he was painting—according to Leslie and Taylor, Miss Russell, according to Malone, Lady Beauchamp—the sight of his left eye became suddenly so much obscured that he was obliged to leave off work, and, within ten weeks, the sight of that eye was entirely gone. Still, though condemned by his misfortune to what was, no doubt, at first deemed a temporary, but was really a permanent abandonment of his art, Sir Joshua did not at first give up his social engagements. We find him spending time at his Richmond villa, and visiting his warm-hearted friend Burke at Beaconsfield, in company with Malone, Wyndham, and others; after which he goes for a time to Brighthelmstone for the sea-air.

About this time his faithful niece, Miss Palmer, writes to a cousin:—

". . . I may say, without vanity, that my presence is now very necessary to my uncle, as he never reads himself, and his evenings are principally passed in playing at cards, which might possibly not always be the case, if I did not always make up his parties; and I could not bear the thought of his spending much of his time alone."

Well might Boswell write in October of this year :—

"Sir Joshua Reynolds's loss of the sight of one eye, and weakness of the other, you may believe must affect him deeply; he is another instance of *dici beatus ante obitum nemo*."

The career of Reynolds as a painter was practically at an end, as he found himself compelled to acknowledge; and the Pocket-Book for 1790—the last of the series—is a sad record, containing no note of any sitters, but only a quantity of social engagements, destined, no doubt, to fill the void so suddenly left in the well-filled life. It is in a touching letter to Sheridan, with regard to the making over to him, at a reduced price, of the beautiful "Mrs Sheridan as St Cecilia," which he had never yet been in a position to claim, that Sir Joshua, repeating for the last time, with a touching *naïveté*, his favourite phrase, writes :—

"It is with great regret I part with the best picture I ever painted; for though I have every year hoped to paint better and better, and may truly say *Nil actum reputans dum quid superesset agendum*, it has not always been the case. However, there is now an end of the pursuit; the race is over, whether it is won or lost."

It was then, at a moment when the master was, under the altered circumstances of his life, perhaps all the more tenacious of his authority, and more inclined to assert the pre-eminence which none had hitherto sought to dispute, that came an unfortunate, and, on neither side, very dignified, disagreement with the Academy, or rather with a powerful section of it. This culminated in the temporary resignation by Sir Joshua of the presidential chair, and even of his membership in the body which owed so much

to the paramount attraction of his work, and the lustre of his name.

The versions of both sides—the *plaidoyer* for the Academy given in Farington's *Life of Reynolds*, and the President's own account of the matter, set forth in some manuscript notes furnished to Leslie by his great-niece Miss Gwatkin—are given at length in Leslie and Taylor's biography, to which those curious as to the details of the fight must be referred.

The hero of the occasion, round whom raged the battle of the opposing factions, was Joseph Bonomi the elder, a distinguished architect who had come to England as far back as 1767, at the invitation of the brothers Adam, by whom he was for some time retained. He was frequently employed in England by noblemen and gentlemen to design their country seats, and his great knowledge of perspective gave him an unquestionable pre-eminence as an architectural draughtsman.

Sir Joshua had long expressed his concern that the Professorship of Perspective in the Academy should remain permanently vacant, deeming such a state of things discreditable to the teaching body.

Farington's statement that the President by his casting vote secured the election of Bonomi as Associate, with the view of procuring him to be subsequently made a full Academician and appointed to the vacant Professorship, is substantially correct. He thinks fit, however, to couple with it the unworthy insinuation that Reynolds acted as he did out of respect for Lord Aylesford and Bonomi's other avowed patrons.

After this preliminary struggle, in which the President carried his candidate, was to come the real battle between the new Associate, Bonomi, on the one hand, and a Mr Edwards, also an Associate, on the other. A large and

influential section of the Academicians had resolved that the latter should be the new Professor of Perspective. It is at this point that the cabal evidently existing within the Academy against the President alleged, on his part, an improper mode of procedure and an undue attempt to influence their choice. Sir Joshua had notified to Bonomi to send in some specimens of his architectural drawings on the day appointed for the next meeting (February 10th), to be placed in the council-room for inspection; but it was alleged by the cabal that the choice being between artists who were already Associates, and, therefore, presumably well-known to the Academy, this was an offensive and unnecessary novelty, and the drawings were accordingly, by a vote of the members assembled, ordered to be removed. A ballot was thereupon taken, not yet for the choice of the Professor of Perspective, but for the election of a Royal Academician, to fill the existing vacancy; and Fuseli, no candidate for the vacant Professorship, was elected by a large majority, against Bonomi.

The next step in the conflict was the formal resignation by Sir Joshua, not only of the Presidency but of this membership in the Royal Academy, this being addressed to the secretary, without further allusion to the causes which had brought it about. The master persisting in his resignation, notwithstanding the King's desire, expressed through Sir William Chambers, that he should continue in the President's chair, the general meeting of the Academicians, assembled on the 3d of March 1790, accepted that resignation, and determined upon shortly taking steps to fill up the vacancy.

There is something inexpressibly mean and unworthy in the slighting terms of the vote unanimously passed: "That the thanks of the Academy be given to Sir Joshua

Reynolds for the able and attentive manner in which he had so many years discharged his duty as President of the Society." Even adopting the version furnished by the cabal, we may, by reading between the lines, convince ourselves of the feeling against Reynolds which coloured the action of the majority, and made them seize upon a plausible excuse for defying his authority. Decidedly the infant Academy was not generous to its greatest members. It had accepted, without any effort at appeasement, the quarrel fastened upon it by hot-headed Gainsborough; and now, making no allowance for the inestimable services rendered by the great leader, or his present misfortunes, it elbowed him, on an insufficient pretext, out of the presidential chair, and rewarded his services with a minute of thanks more applicable to a subordinate clerk or officer in some commercial concern than to Sir Joshua Reynolds.

One can scarcely believe that the Academy is here dealing with the painter whom, at the moment, there is no longer any one to rival in England; with the member of the Academy whose unrivalled powers of attraction for the public have, in a short time, placed the Society in a position beyond the reach of competition.

This rough and unmannerly assertion of the letter of the law by the majority was not, however, allowed to pass without condemnation by the minority who had backed up Reynolds in his action with regard to the vacant Professorship. Thomas Sandby, Barry, Opie, Northcote, Rigaud, Nollekens, Zoffany—that is, some of the most distinguished members—signed an emphatic and even violent protest, recording their approval of Sir Joshua's action on the occasion, and stigmatising as "an unprovoked and unmerited personal insult to the President, from whose performances the Arts have received so much honour, and from whose services the Academy has re-

ceived so many important benefits, the ordering the specimens of Mr Bonomi to be sent out of the room."

Sir Joshua, in his own manuscript account of the proceedings, dwells especially on the ardent desire he has nourished, during the preceding five years, that the vacant professorship be filled up. He quotes his eloquent pleading to the Academicians in favour of Bonomi, including a monition—as unpalatable, no doubt, then as it would be if addressed to the Royal Academicians of our own day—that "no private friendship, or even near relation, should outweigh the duty and obligation which they owed to the Society; that friendship, however valuable, was likely, from what he had observed, to be the bane of the Academy . . ."

His account of the already-mentioned sitting of the 10th of February, coloured as it evidently is with the natural indignation aroused by the insulting treatment to which he has been subjected, proves conclusively the existence of an overpowering faction, having already made up its mind on the subject to be brought before the meeting, and determined, with as little respect as possible, to ride rough-shod over the President, and annihilate his authority.

He, having—as he states—with great difficulty obtained that the obnoxious drawings shall be placed in a position where they can be seen, proceeds to make a final appeal to the assembled members in favour of Bonomi's election as Academician. This is contemptuously met by the curt motion, that the drawings be sent out of the room, which is passed by a great majority. Here it is interesting to find Barry—as passionate and excessive in what he writes and says, as he is frigid and calculating in what he paints—supporting Sir Joshua in terms so unmeasured as the following: "Nobody can be

found so lost to all shame as to dare to second so infamous a motion."

The election of Fuseli and the consequent resignation of the President, have already been recorded. From the final fragment of our master's manuscript, it is evident that he is not unconscious of the weak points in his own case; that he has a dramatic instinct sufficiently strong to enable him to divine the view which, outside the sacred walls, may be taken of the "Battle of the Painters" by those inclined to favour the enemy.

Without discussing the rights and wrongs of the matter from the standpoint of pure routine, we may, from the facts, as given by the respective parties—and these do not, after all, show very material discrepancies—draw certain inferences. It is pretty clear that the question of filling the vacant Professorship of Perspective was not the one which in reality so passionately interested the Academicians: they chose it as a convenient *casus belli*. The design of the majority, as Reynolds clearly perceived, was to shake off the benignant, if a little too fatherly, rule of their President, to rebel against the influence which his character and his social power, no less than his artistic supremacy, caused him to exercise. It may be that Sir Joshua's long and successful reign had a little too much led him to identify the Academy with himself; to dispense, according to his inclinations, and with reference to his social relations, its official hospitalities; to take too little count of the views of the other members. Still, there can be no reasonable doubt of his absolute single-mindedness, of the entire disinterestedness of his desire to serve the best interests of the body over which he presided.

It will not be questioned that the rebellion against his authority was carried out with unnecessary brutality, and that it rested on insufficient grounds; though, if the master

had been in his usual health, and in the enjoyment of the practice of his art, it is doubtful whether his resentment would have taken the extreme form of a resignation, not only of the office of President, but of the membership of the Academy.

Now, however, the inimical Academicians apparently perceived that they had gone too far, and that to sever Reynolds's connection with the Society, while he lived, was to sever the head from the body. A meeting was held, at which a resolution was passed, in terms calculated to appease the President's resentment, and a committee appointed to wait upon him, requesting that, "in obedience to the gracious desires of His Majesty, and in compliance with the wishes of the Academy, he would withdraw his letter of resignation." Sir Joshua, to whom these overtures for peace soon restored his wonted serenity, received the deputation from the Academy with great civility, invited them to dine, and having acceded to their wishes by withdrawing his resignation, resumed the presidential chair on the 16th of March—the gracious permission of the King having been previously received.

The veteran master had still continued to paint at intervals less for gain than amusement: sometimes touching up old paintings in his possession, sometimes working upon such of his own canvases as had remained in the studio; not absolutely ceasing to toy with the brush until November 1791. Leslie and Taylor mention, dubitatively, as his last male portrait, a fine one of Fox at Holland House.

The Exhibition of the Academy in 1790 was the last which was adorned with Sir Joshua's paintings; and those shown on this occasion had, in most cases, been completed, or carried to the verge of completion, before the first signs of his misfortune appeared in July 1789.

Among the works exhibited was a portrait of the master, by himself—evidently that famous and often-repeated likeness of Sir Joshua in spectacles, which is the best record of his vigorous old age, and has infinitely more interest, in its simple truth, than the *portrait d'apparat* painted, as we have seen, for Florence, and repeated with some variation for the Academy. The canvas shown was, no doubt, the first of the type, and the picture which passed to his niece, Miss Palmer, after the master's death. We have it, indeed, on Northcote's authority that this last-named portrait was the original. It was No. 106 at the Reynolds Exhibition, to which it was lent by Mrs Gwatkin. The same comprehensive display of the President's works contained two original repetitions of the picture: one, the portrait belonging to the Duke of Leeds (also mentioned by Northcote), the other, the similar picture contributed by Mr Louis Huth—all three canvases being of exactly the same dimensions. The Marchioness of Thomond presented a copy of the same likeness, in memory of her uncle, to The Club, in whose possession it still remains.

The other works exhibited at the Academy on the same occasion were:—The full-lengths of Lord Rawden, and of "Mrs Billington as St Cecilia;" and the half-lengths of Sir John Leicester, Mrs Cholmondeley, and Sir James Esdaile.

Miss Burney writes, in May 1790:—

"My dear Mrs Ord was so good as to come to me one morning at nine o'clock to take me to the exhibition, where I saw, I fear, the last works of the first of our painters—Sir Joshua Reynolds. The thought, and his unhappy loss of eyesight, made the view of his pictures very melancholy to me."

On the 10th of December 1790, the President delivers his Fifteenth and farewell Discourse to the students of the Academy, and in it, with perfect fairness and characteristic tact, he makes some general reference to the differences which have so nearly deprived him of the right to address them again *ex cathedrâ*. While taking care not to re-open in any way the controversy just closed, he manages to record his satisfaction that the Professorships have hitherto been filled by men of distinguished abilities, "who have so well acquitted themselves of their duty in their several departments. I look upon it to be of importance," he adds, "that none of them should be ever left unfilled: a neglect to provide for qualified persons is to produce a neglect of qualifications."

The Discourse winds up with the notable panegyric of Michelangelo, the mighty figure whom he has consistently and without affectation worshipped through his career—introducing, as has been seen, his bust in his official portrait, wearing his effigy as a talisman on his signet-ring, building his artistic theories upon the practice of his idol, so diametrically opposed to his own—but luckily not indulging, save on the exceptional occasions to which reference has been made, in an imitation for which he has recognised himself to be too imperfectly equipped.

The concluding passage is as follows:—

"I reflect, not without vanity, that these Discourses bear testimony of my admiration of that truly divine man; and I should desire that the last words I should pronounce in this Academy, and from this place, might be the name of *Michael Angelo*."

Leslie recounts, on the authority of Rogers, who, as a young man, was present at the farewell, that, upon Reynolds descending from the lecturer's chair, Burke stepped

forward, and taking his hand, held it while he addressed him in the words of Milton :—

> "The angel ended, and in Adam's ear
> So charming left his voice, that he awhile
> Thought him still speaking, still stood fixed to hear."

This was one of Burke's splendid theatricalities, of which more memorable and historical instances will at once occur to the reader. The compliment, though magnificent, was not altogether well placed, seeing that, however enthralling the matter of the Discourse might be, the manner was anything but attractive. We have the testimony of Northcote that the delivery of the Academy Discourses was monotonous and ineffective, perhaps because the deafness of the lecturer stood in the way of an expressive modulation of his voice. On one of the evenings, the audience consisting not only of artists, but of "the learned and the great," the Earl of C——, coming up to Reynolds at the end of his lecture, thus addressed him :—"Sir Joshua, you read your Discourse in so low a tone that I did not distinguish one word you said." To whom the President, with an exquisite urbanity which should have been a lesson to the discourteous interlocutor, replied : "That was to my advantage."

It would be a mistake to think of our master at this moment (1791) as wholly giving way to depression, and secluding himself from society, because he was half blind, and thus for ever deprived of his life's occupation. On the contrary, we find him dining out, frequenting routs, paying visits to great houses in the country as assiduously as before—to Beaconsfield, to Ampthill, to Woburn Abbey —and enthusiastically working to obtain subscriptions for the monument to be erected to Dr Johnson in St Paul's

Cathedral. Moreover, he still continued to take an active part in the direction of the Royal Academy, and with great adroitness, notwithstanding the alleged disapprobation of the King and the open opposition of Sir William Chambers, succeeding in extracting from that body a vote of £100 towards the monument of his friend. The carrying of the vote was, above all, a victory over Chambers, a friend whose action had now ceased to be friendly. His plausible objection had been that the monument was a business with which they had no concern, the Doctor having no connection with the Academy but the nominal one of deriving from it an empty title—that of Professor of Ancient Literature.

Sir Joshua's speech on the occasion is a vigorous and even, for him, passionate piece of pleading, in a style more direct, more full of point that anything to be found in the formal Discourses. It proves not only his loyalty to his dead companion, but his capacity for putting a dubious case in the most convincing way, and gives evidence of that pertinacity which, in his duel with the Academy, had caused him, in the face of the most violent opposition, to win in the long run.

Another instance of his desire and capacity to serve the interests of his friends is the election of Boswell, in July 1791, as Secretary for Foreign Correspondence to the Academy, in succession to Baretti. It must be owned that here friendship went a little too far, for, although Bozzy had now, in virtue of his famous *Life*, brought out in the April of this year) with a dedication to Sir Joshua), become a man of letters entitled to be taken seriously, yet there was nothing, either in his position or in his special acquirements, entitling him to step into the shoes of the accomplished though cantankerous personage who had been the first to hold the office.

We have now arrived at the last sad stage of Sir Joshua's life-journey, in which, in addition to the partial deprivation of eyesight which had already befallen him, came the sudden and, to the physicians, so puzzling breakdown of general health, bringing with it loss of appetite and a depression of spirits from which he had never before suffered.

On the 10th of November 1791, we find him writing to West, expressing his intention to resign the office of President, the duties of which he felt himself incapable of performing during the ensuing year. The Academy, desirous no doubt of making the *amende honorable* for the ingratitude and the lack of common courtesy shown in the war which had raged round the Professorship of Perspective, sent a deputation to assure the President of their regret at his determination, and to request that he would at least nominally retain the dignity, choosing a deputy to act when necessary. Sir Joshua acquiesced, and was re-elected President at the meeting of the 10th of December 1791, Benjamin West being appointed as his deputy. It appears, however, that he was never again able to perform any of the duties of the office which he had filled with such unaffected dignity and such efficacious zeal for the best interests of the Academy. In letting the sceptre drop from his enfeebled hands he gave the surest sign that he felt the end approaching.

Boswell writes to Temple in November 1791 :—

"My spirits have been still more sunk by seeing Sir Joshua Reynolds almost as low as myself. He has, for more than two months past, had a pain in his blind eye, the effect of which has been to occasion a weakness in the other, and he broods over the dismal apprehension of becoming quite blind. He has been kept so

low, as to diet, that he is quite relaxed and desponding. He who used to be looked upon as, perhaps, the most happy man in the world, is now as I tell you. I force myself to be a great deal with him, to do what is in my power to amuse him. Your friend Miss Palmer's assiduity and attention to him, in every respect, is truly charming.''

Sir Joshua had been among those who worked most zealously to obtain Miss Burney's release from the Court duties which had been undermining her health and wasting her life, and which, it must be owned, she performed so indifferently. She had finally quitted the Court on July 7th, 1791, and in the month of September of that year wrote :—

"I dined with Sir Joshua last week, and met Mr Burke and his brother, Mr Malone, the venerable Bishop of St Pol de Léon, and a French abbé or chevalier."

In October of the same year we find the following record :—

"Another evening . . . . my father took me to Sir Joshua Reynolds. I had long languished to see that kindly, zealous friend, but his ill-health had intimidated me from making the attempt; and now my dear father went upstairs alone, and inquired of Miss Palmer if her uncle was well enough to admit me. He returned for me immediately. I felt the utmost pleasure in again mounting his staircase. I then shook hands with Sir Joshua. He had a bandage over one eye, and the other shaded with a green half-bonnet. He seemed serious even to sadness, though extremely kind. 'I am very glad,' he said, in a weak voice and dejected accent, 'to see you again, and I wish I could see you better, but I have only

one eye now, and hardly that.' I was really quite touched. The expectation of total blindness depresses him inexpressibly, not, however, inconceivably (!). I hardly knew how to express either my concern for his altered situation since our meeting, or my joy on again being with him; but my difficulty was short. Miss Palmer eagerly drew me to herself, and recommended to Sir Joshua to go on with his cards. He had no spirit to oppose; probably, indeed, no inclination.

"One other time we called again in a morning. Sir Joshua and his niece were alone, and that invaluable man was even more dejected than before."

What Reynolds and his friends chiefly feared was the humour which had gathered over the lost eye, and defied all remedies. The depression and general physical decline came, however, from a much more dangerous disease, which Sir George Baker and Dr Warren, the two eminent physicians attending him, showed themselves quite unable to diagnose. They evidently held the mysterious disorder to be, in a great measure, the result of imagination, and strove to stimulate their illustrious patient with the usual commonplace, "What can we do for a man who will do nothing for himself?"

It was only within a fortnight of his death that a serious consultation of doctors and surgeons was held, and it was discovered, too late, that the patient's malady was a grave affection of the liver—an inordinate growth of the organ, which had incommoded all the bodily functions. Malone states, indeed, that, on the body being opened after death, the liver, which ought to have weighed about five pounds, was found to have increased to an extraordinary size, and to weigh nearly eleven. Sir Joshua, wiser in this than his physicians, had from

the commencement of his final illness, a presentiment of its fatal termination. When he had made up his mind that there was no hope, he, indeed, displayed a serenity, an unaffected resignation, well worthy of one whose life had been so well filled, so pure and blameless as his.

Burke writes, on the 26th of January 1792, to his son Richard :—

"Our poor friend Sir Joshua declines daily. For some time past he has kept his bed. At times he has pain, but, for the most part, is tolerably easy. Nothing can equal the tranquillity with which he views his end. He congratulates himself on it as a happy conclusion of a happy life. He spoke of you in a style that was affecting. I don't believe there are any persons he values more sincerely than you and your mother."

It was on Thursday evening, the 23d of February 1792, that Sir Joshua Reynolds expired, quietly and without suffering, in the sixty-ninth year of his age.

It is not proposed to quote once again in full Burke's well-known obituary notice, written in his friend's own house, and a few hours after his death. It is the less necessary to do so, because, while its splendid generalities apply well enough to the master's character, and fittingly record the noble serenity of his life, they fail to characterise his art with any degree of definiteness. The sounding periods, rhetorically effective as they are, leave, in this respect, but a vague and colourless impression behind them. With much felicity he says, however—and here we may surely agree with him, although Sir Joshua himself would certainly have deprecated such an assertion :—

. . . . . .

"To be such a painter, he was a profound and penetrating philosopher."

"In full affluence of foreign and domestic fame, admired by the expert in art and by the learned in science, courted by the great, caressed by sovereign powers, and celebrated by distinguished poets, his native humility, modesty, and candour never forsook him, even on surprise or provocation; nor was the least degree of arrogance or assumption visible to the most scrutinising eye in any part of his conduct or discourse."

. . . . . .

On Saturday, the 3d of March 1792, the body, which had, on the night previous to the funeral, been removed to the Royal Academy, where it had lain in state in the Model-Room, was interred in the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral, near the tomb of Sir Christopher Wren. The funeral was the most imposing, the most remarkable for the celebrated, the variously-distinguished personages who attended it, that the eighteenth century had seen, with the sole exception of that of Garrick, which, at least, equalled it in these respects, and, indeed, included among the mourners more than one illustrious man whose star had gone under before that of Reynolds himself.

The pall-bearers at the solemn function in honour of the deceased great master were the Dukes of Dorset, Leeds and Portland, the Marquis Townshend, the Marquis of Abercorn, the Earls of Carlisle, Inchiquin, and Upper Ossory, Viscount Palmerston, and Lord Elliot. Edmund Burke, Malone, and Metcalfe attended as executors; after these came the Royal Academy in a body, and the students; Bennet Langton, as Professor of Ancient Literature (in succession to Johnson); Boswell, as Secretary for

Foreign Correspondence. The church was represented by the Archbishop of York, the Bishop of London, and the Dean of Norwich; medicine by John Hunter, Dr Fordyce, Dr Brocklesby, Dr Ash, etc.; dilettantism and the patronage of art by Sir George Beaumont, Sir Abraham Hume, Charles Townley, John Julius Angerstein, Alderman Boydell; the dramatic art by John Philip Kemble. Solemn dignity, rather than more exterior pomp, marked the memorable procession, the first carriage of which had reached St Paul's before the last had left Somerset House. Well might Burke, writing to his son, say:—"Everything, I think, was just as our deceased friend would, if living, have wished it to be, for he was, as you know, not altogether indifferent to this kind of observances . . ."

As a memorial of the ceremony was presented a print, engraved by Bartolozzi, showing a female mourner clasping an urn, accompanied by the Genius of Painting, who holds in one hand an extinguished torch and points with the other to a sarcophagus.

Sir Joshua's will had been written entirely by himself, and somewhat hurriedly, at a moment when he feared that total blindness was imminent. By it he bequeathed the great bulk of his considerable fortune to his niece, Mary Palmer (afterwards Countess of Inchiquin, and Marchioness of Thomond)—a just requital of her unremitting care of him in later years, and one proof the more of the perfect balance and equity of his character. His favourite niece was unquestionably Offie (Theophila Gwatkin); and yet she came off only second best, although he left her the very substantial legacy of £10,000 in the Three per Cents. The sister, Miss Frances Reynolds, got £2500 in the funds for life, with reversion to Miss Palmer. To Edmund Burke

he left £2000, besides cancelling a bond for the like amount.

Among the legacies were:—

To the Earl of Upper Ossory, any picture of his own painting, remaining undisposed of at his death, that he might choose. (The picture chosen was the "Nymph and Boy," or "Venus and Cupid," contributed by the Dowager Lady Castletown of Upper Ossory to the Reynolds Exhibition in 1884.)

To Lord Palmerston, the second choice. (The picture actually chosen was the "Infant Academy.")

To Sir Abraham Hume, "the choice of his Claude Lorraines."

To Sir George Beaumont, Sebastian Bourdon's "Return of the Ark" (now No. 64 in the National Gallery).

William Mason obtained the miniature of Milton by Samuel Cooper, and Richard Burke, junior, the Cromwell by the same famous artist.

The fine cabinet of drawings, including many which have since found their way into the national and other great collections, was sold in 1794. In March 1795 the carefully-chosen collection of pictures by old masters, which had been offered to the Royal Academy by Sir Joshua during his lifetime at a very low price, but declined by them, was sold by auction for £10,319, 2s. 6d. In 1796 the contents of the studio, including various historical and fancy pieces of the master's own painting, together with some unclaimed portraits (failures, or canvases never paid for?), were sold, and fetched £4535, 18s. The sale in 1821 of the pictures which had been retained by Lady Thomond, including the "Virtues" for the New College window, brought no less than £15,040—a notable proof of the rapid increase in value of Sir Joshua's works after his death.

CHAPTER XI

Technique of Sir Joshua Reynolds's Art in the Earlier and Later Time—Causes of Premature Fading and Decay—In the Earlier Period—In the Later Period—Best Preserved Canvases—Reynolds as a Man of Letters—His Development and Literary Style—His Theory not in agreement with his Practice—Notes to Mason's Translation of Du Fresnoy's *Art of Painting*—Journey to Flanders and Holland—Analysis of the Fifteen Discourses delivered at the Royal Academy.

THIS is not the place for an elaborate disquisition on the technical methods of Sir Joshua Reynolds, even did the writer deem himself competent to undertake an examination of them. It is necessary, all the same, to say a few words on the subject, seeing that the ephemeral character of his colouring was proverbial in his own day, even as it is in ours, and that his sitters had fully as much ground for complaint, in this respect, as the special class of Reynolds amateurs have had, and still have, for fear and misgiving in our own.

Nothing is more remarkable than the continued vogue of the master, the artistic and popular supremacy maintained by him, practically without a break, throughout his lengthy career, notwithstanding this terrible uncertainty, of which his sitters must, after a time, have been perfectly well aware. Knowing the risks they ran, and what a lottery it was whether the glow of Sir Joshua's colour would endure, or prove as evanescent as

the vapours of morning, the majority of them must yet have been of the opinion expressed by Opie, "that the faded pictures of Reynolds were finer than those of most other painters in a perfect condition."

The contemporary records are full of allusions to the fleeting character of his pigments; as when Horace Walpole suggests that he ought to be paid for his pictures by annuities, to endure as long as the canvases themselves. On another occasion, because the master will not go into raptures over his famous "Henry VII.," and declares it to be in the old Flemish manner, he suggests ill-naturedly (in a passage already quoted) that Sir Joshua is loth to admire paint that has lasted so long. It has been quaintly said, too, from the bad state of his pictures even in his own time, that his portraits perished sooner than the men they represented. The occasion has already been referred to on which Sir Joshua took back of his own accord, in after years, and renovated with "fast colours," the portrait of Sir William Hamilton. He has himself said, in the course of some remarks on his practice:—

"I was always willing to believe that my uncertainty of proceeding in my works—that is, my never being sure of my hand, and my frequent alterations—arose from a refined taste, which could not acquiesce in anything short of a high degree of excellence. I had not an opportunity of being early initiated in the principles of colouring; no man, indeed, could teach me. If I have never been settled with respect to colouring, let it, at the same time, be remembered that my unsteadiness in this respect proceeded from an inordinate desire to possess every kind of excellence that I saw in the work of others, without considering that there are, in colouring, as in style,

excellences which are incompatible with each other. However, this pursuit, or, indeed, any similar pursuit, prevents the artist from being tired of his art. We all know how often those masters who sought after colouring changed their manners; while others, merely from not seeing various modes, acquiesced all their lives in that with which they set out. On the contrary, I tried every effect of colour, and, leaving out every colour in its turn, showed every colour that I could do without it. As I alternately left out every colour, I tried every new colour, and often, it is well known, failed. The former practice, I am aware, may be compared, by those whose chief object is ridicule, to that of the poet mentioned in the *Spectator*, who, in a poem of twenty-four books, contrived in each book to leave out a letter. But I was influenced by no such idle or foolish affectation. My fickleness in the mode of colouring arose from an eager desire to attain the highest excellence. This is the only merit I assume to myself from my conduct in that respect. . . ."

Of the constant fidgetiness of his practice, of the tentative variations and experiments in which he indulged during the whole of the earlier half of his career—and, indeed, in a greater or less degree, throughout his life—those curious, technical notes are the best evidence, which, jotted down in a strange jargon of Italian interlarded with English, are to be found scattered through the Pocket-Books. There is, of course, nothing unusual in the progressive and legitimate development of an artist's technical methods as his career advances, as his style widens and changes. There are, on the other hand, but few instances of a master arrived at maturity so varying his practice as Reynolds did, from picture to picture, and almost from day to day, in the search after more brilliant and yet more

brilliant effects of colour; or showing so light-hearted a disregard as he did of the dangers involved in such a method. In the English school almost the only parallel instance is to be found in Turner's experimental technique, more particularly in his third and most dazzling manner; and of this the disastrous results are only too convincingly shown in many a magnificent ruin in the National Gallery and elsewhere.

Two main causes have been at work to account for that decay and disintegration, of which no one who has even a passing acquaintance with Sir Joshua's canvases can remain unaware. The first is the use, or rather the abuse, by him of such ephemeral colours as lake and carmine, in the glazings which were the finish and the chief beauty of his paintings; the result being that these semi-transparent tints evaporated, leaving exposed, in the firm modelling of the earlier time, the pallid forms of Sir Joshua's sitters—ghosts of their former selves. As examples, but very mitigated ones, of this kind of metamorphosis, may be cited the half-length "Lady Elizabeth Keppel," and the beautiful "Countess of Albemarle" in the National Gallery, the latter of which, faded as it is, still remains a work of exquisite distinction. This practice, which distinguishes chiefly the earlier half of the master's career, is shown, nevertheless, to have endured, in a greater or less degree, down to, and even beyond, 1770. As we gather from the notes that lake and vermilion were being used almost contemporaneously on different canvases about this period, it may be assumed that he weaned himself, by degrees, and with difficulty, from the dangerous practice.

In Mason's *Observations on Sir Joshua Reynolds's Method of Colouring*, published by Cotton in 1859, the amateur painter and professional poet gives, according to his lights, an account of the painter's method in the year

1754, when he saw him lay in and work upon a portrait of Lord Holderness. He notes here that, even for the too rubicund countenance of the sitter, no vermilion was used, but, as he imagined, lake. The picture appears to have been, when just finished, a brilliant performance ; but while the crimson coat stood well, the flesh tints *very soon faded*, and soon after the forehead in particular cracked, and would have peeled off, had it not been repaired by Reynolds's pupil Doughty. Northcote, later on, ventures to remonstrate with his master, and to recommend the use of vermilion in lieu of lake and carmine. To whom he replies, looking at his hand, "I can see no vermilion in flesh."

In the later works the chief causes of decay have been the abuse of bitumen, or asphaltum, in the backgrounds and shadows,causing a sort of semi-liquefaction in the pigments, and then corrugation, cracking, and opacity. And again, the vehicle employed is often a waxy-resinous one, the result being that the colours mixed with it rise up in blisters or cracks, and are liable to be detached from the surface, with the result that the process of re-lining, or, more properly, back-lining, becomes necessary. The application of hot irons, in order by force to unite the new with the old canvas, often obliterates the sharpness, the accentuations of touch, of the picture in its more pastose portions, and even—when, as is often the case, wax has entered into the composition of the pigments—melts them, and gives a blurred and confused appearance to the whole.

Yet another cause of decay and ruin has been the ignorance and lack of care of many picture-cleaners. Regardless of Sir Joshua's subtle glazes underlying the coats of darkened varnish which it is sought to remove, they have treated the latter with solvents, not only removing the offending outer surface which has discoloured and obscured the work, but with it the finishing glazes them-

selves—thus flaying and ruining the canvas under treatment. If the peculiarity of Sir Joshua's technique has caused him to suffer, perhaps more than any other artist of his time, from the process, he is certainly not alone in so suffering. Many of Gainsborough's canvases have been seen—especially at the Old Masters Exhibitions of the Royal Academy—transformed into chalky, anæmic shadows by some similar process; though, as a rule, his paste is of a more resisting character, and can somewhat better withstand the onslaughts of the picture-cleaner, than that of his great contemporary.

It is not possible to concede more than a limited acquiescence to Tom Taylor's dictum that, as a rule, "Reynolds's pictures, during the eight or ten years after 1752, are more simply and safely painted than his later ones." They are certainly the former, but are they the latter? The majority of pictures in the "ghost" condition unquestionably belong to the earlier half of the master's career—so much so, indeed, that this pallid, *exsangue* aspect is one of the denoting marks by which productions of this period may be assigned to their proper places in the life-work of the master. On the other hand, we are all familiar with terrible ruins belonging to the later phases of his career—ruins in which the splendid glow, emulating now that of Venice, now that of Rembrandt, is obscured to blackness by dirty, irremovable varnish; or fused into a hardly distinguishable mass of pigments, of loose, blurred contours, by some of the processes which have just been shortly indicated.

Still, if we are asked to single out the best preserved canvases of the master—those in which his power and brilliancy appear least impaired, those, in fact, in which the typical Sir Joshua still most unmistakably shines forth—we must select such works as the "Lady Cockburn and her Children" (1773-5); the "Miss Bowles" (1775); the two

"Dilettanti" portrait-groups (1777-1780); the "Countess of Lincoln," and "Lady Elizabeth Seymour" (both between 1781-4); the "Ladies Waldegrave" (1781); the "Mrs Mary Robinson" (1782); the "Mrs Siddons as the Tragic Muse" (1784); the "Lady Caroline Price" (1786); the "Lady Elizabeth Foster" (1787); the "Heads of Angels" at the National Gallery (1787); the "Mrs Braddyll" (1789).

Malone, though he naturally views Reynolds and his art chiefly from the literary side, finds space to record that he was "so anxious to discover the method used by the Venetian painters that he destroyed some valuable ancient pictures by rubbing out the various layers of colour, in order to investigate and ascertain it." As Sir Joshua has been found on all other occasions showing an extreme reverence for the works of the old masters—save that he is, on occasion, a little too confident in his own powers of restoration—we need not seriously infer from this passage that he ever actually destroyed or irreparably injured any ancient work of value. He may well have experimented on the *corpus vile* of some inferior school work, but for any such ruthless destruction as here hinted at he was far too enthusiastic a student—and also, be it remembered, too keen a man of business.

Nothing is more remarkable in the great career of our master than the genuine literary ability which he developed by degrees, side by side with, yet quite independently of, his artistic capacity. And we must wonder the more when we remember that he received not more than the education of the average school-boy of his time, and in the course of his well-filled and practically uninterrupted career was unable to supplement early deficiencies by any sustained course of reading or study. We have before us the instance of a mind developed and a talent matured as it were from without, by constant contact with the noblest

intellects of the time ; with all that was most brilliant and most weighty in the world of literature ; most able and most aspiring in the world of statesmanship and politics ; most sprightly and most distinguished in the worlds of aristocratic and literary fashion ; most fascinating in that world within a world—the stage. The intellect of the great painter was, as we have seen, a singularly receptive, a singularly clear and unbiassed one ; the opportunities afforded to him for cultivation, by uninterrupted intercourse with the various circles in which his sympathetic personality found and maintained a prominent place, were unique ; and the result was the singular progressive development that may be traced no less in the man than in the artist.

It may not be useless to repeat that this evident desire for mental development in every direction, this far-reaching interest in things not immediately connected with the technical side of art, must account in a great measure for the fact already commented upon, that Sir Joshua sought somewhat less than might have been expected the society of his brother-artists and his own kind. He by no means shunned or slighted them, but he evidently preferred the invigorating companionship of the brilliant contemporaries with whom we have seen him associating in loving intimacy throughout the forty years of his great career.

This development in the direction of synthesis, of that wide and not infrequently felicitous generalisation which has been so often and so justly noted as the most distinguishing feature of his literary work, may be seen gradually growing ; the views of the master, on the theory even more than the practice of art, may be seen enfolding themselves with greater authority and with less dogmatism as he goes along. The kernel of his theories may, no doubt, be found in those three short letters to the *Idler*, written in 1759, at the instance of Dr Johnson ; but here the writer is

at once more absolute and less felicitous in his generalisations, more inclined to paradox in his enunciations, both of theory and of fact, than he becomes later on in the Discourses. Moreover, as we pass from the earlier to the later of these, we perceive a marked increase in their literary and didactic value. There becomes evident a very notable desire to correct the occasional excess and exaggeration of statement into which the President of the Royal Academy, addressing its students *ex cathedrâ*, and seeking to underline as strongly as he can the theories and precepts which he inculcates, has been betrayed.

Sir Joshua, as the man of letters, as the theorist and preceptor in the art of which he is, in his own peculiar way, so brilliant a practician, need not be looked for far beyond the Fifteen Discourses.

The notes to William Mason's translation of Alphonse Du Fresnoy's *Art of Painting* constitute, however, an excellent supplement to these, with here and there a practical piece of advice to the artist, or a pithy condensation of artistic experience strikingly put; but in general they are at one with the principles more elaborately and with more of oratorical dignity enunciated in the Discourses.

So masterly a passage as the following piece of satire, veiled in precept—contained in the painter's note* on the line,

"'Twas not by words Apelles charm'd mankind,"

cannot be passed over in silence:—

"As Fresnoy has condescended to give advice of a prudential kind, let me be permitted here to recommend to the artist to talk as little as possible of his own works, much less to praise them; and this not so much for the sake of avoiding the character of vanity, as for keeping

* Note IX., verse 89.

clear of a real detriment; of a real productive cause which prevents his progress in his art, and dulls the edge of enterprise.

"He who has the habit of insinuating his own excellence to the little circle of his friends, with whom he comes into contact, will grow languid in his exertions to fill a larger space of reputation. He will fall into the habit of acquiescing in the partial opinions of a few; he will grow restive in his own; by admiring himself he will come to repeat himself, and then there is an end of improvement. In a painter it is particularly dangerous to be too good a speaker; it lessens the necessary endeavours to make himself master of the language which properly belongs to his art—that of his pencil. This circle of self-applause and reflected admiration is to him the world, which he vainly imagines he has engaged in his party, and therefore supposes that further enterprise becomes less necessary."

This state of things obtains to a far greater extent in our own day than it could possibly have done in Sir Joshua's. His words of wisdom conjure up for us, as vividly as may be, the many little pontiffs, each of a separate artistic religion, complacently snuffing up the fumes of the incense offered them by disciple and imitator, and letting genius pale and wither by too carefully shrouding it from the keen blast of public opinion.

The "Journey to Flanders and Holland in the year 1781" is chiefly remarkable as containing much valuable appreciation and criticism, by an artist of eminence, of his great predecessors among the Flemish masters, and chiefly of Rubens and Van Dyck. It is in the form, not of a sustained work, but of notes on the individual pictures, very many of them still to be found in the same places in

which Reynolds inspected them. A word has already been said about the remarkable "Character of Rubens," with which the notes conclude. It is an excellent summing up of the merits and defects of the mighty Antwerper, whom he had avowedly learnt to love and to understand better since he had studied him at his proper home in the churches of Flanders, and in the Dusseldorf Gallery, then enriched with the famous series of pictures by the Flemish master which are now one of the chief glories of the *Alte Pinakothek* of Munich.

There is much here that serves as a corrective to the too extreme pronouncements of the Sir Joshua of the Discourses on the "grand style," on the sublimities of Michelangelo, and the rare perfections of the "Bolognian" school, the praises of which he therein so often finds occasion to sing, with an eloquence and an enthusiasm that cannot be other than genuine. Much earlier—at the close of his Italian tour—we find him, with an intuitive sympathy, analysing and commenting on the masterpieces of sixteenth-century Venetian art, with an attention to the relative proportions of light and shade, and to technique generally, such as he had hardly paid, even to the much-worshipped productions of Buonarroti and Sanzio in the Vatican. Now, again, notwithstanding the strictures and criticisms with which he deems it necessary to qualify his admiration, we see how spontaneous, how ardent is his sympathy with the great Venetian of Flanders.

He loves, and almost fears to love too well, the painter of whom he says, "the effect of his pictures may be not improperly compared to clusters of flowers;" whom, in those final words of his, he appears to be defending, not only against the strictures of others, but against his own in another place:—

"Those who cannot see the extraordinary merit of this great painter, either have a narrow conception of the variety of art, or are led away by the affectation of approving nothing but what comes from the Italian school."

How strangely contrasts with this enthusiasm the curt, dry paragraph devoted by the master to the description of one of the world's noblest works — the "Adoration of the Lamb" of Hubert and Jan van Eyck at Ghent; then seen there in its entirety, and not, as now, despoiled of the wings, which we have to seek out at Berlin and Brussels :—

"In a chapel is a work of the brothers Van Eyck, representing the Adoration of the Lamb, a story from the Apocalypse. It contains a great number of figures in a hard manner, but there is a great character of truth and nature in the heads, and the landskip is well coloured."

This is the "hard, Flemish manner," of which Sir Joshua, even in praise, speaks *dispreszando*, and which Horace Walpole—let it always be remembered to his credit—could appreciate at a moment when in England he was almost alone in so doing.

But it is, after all, to the Discourses that we must look for the authoritative statement of Sir Joshua's views on the theory and practice of his art; and none was more keenly aware than himself how little his life-work, supremely successful as it was, conformed to, or illustrated, those views. At the same time it must be borne in mind that the lectures in question were all—with the exception of the First and the Ninth—prepared for and delivered to the students of the Royal Academy; that the lecturer accordingly felt bound to enunciate for their

benefit, as strongly and definitely as possible, those principles which he judged best calculated to guide and strengthen the pupil in the beginnings of an artistic career. The keynote is to be found in the First Discourse, addressed to the Members on the opening of the Royal Academy :—

"I would chiefly recommend," he says, "that an implicit obedience to the *rules of art*, as established by the practice of the great masters, should be exacted from the *young* students. That those models which have passed through the approbation of ages should be considered by them as perfect and infallible guides, as subjects for their imitation—not their criticism."

And again :—

"The impetuosity of youth is disgusted at the slow approaches of a regular siege, and desires, from mere impatience of labour, to take the citadel by storm. They wish to find some shorter path to excellence, and hope to obtain the reward of eminence by other means than those which the indispensable rules of art have prescribed."

The Second Discourse—the first of the series addressed to the students—deals with the three distinct stages which the President marks out in the study of painting, and with the models which the students are to place before themselves as an aid to their self-development. "Instead of copying the touches of those great masters," he wisely observes, "copy only their conceptions. Instead of treading in their footsteps, endeavour only to keep the same road. Labour to invent on their general principles and way of thinking. Possess yourself with their spirit." He later goes on—in strong contradiction with the spirit

if not with the letter of this most excellent precept, to propose as a model for style in painting the head of the Bolognese eclectics, Ludovico Carracci. This strange proposition is supported by the statement that: "His unaffected breadth of light and shadow, the simplicity of colouring, which, holding its proper rank, does not draw aside the least part of the attention from the subject, and the solemn effect of that twilight which seems diffused over his pictures, appear to me to correspond with grave and dignified subjects better than the more artificial brilliancy of sunshine (!) which enlightens the pictures of Titian."

We had imagined, with all due respect to Sir Joshua, that the principles of the eclectic school of Bologna, as practised by the Carracci, and especially by Ludovico and Agostino—the effort to combine into an artificial whole the power of Michelangelo, the suavity of Raphael, the seductive graces of the Parmese School, and the splendours of the Venetians—were calculated to kill all true self-development from within. Is not the result of their teaching and example to substitute for that invention which Reynolds felicitously characterises as "a new combination of those images which have been previously gathered and deposited in the memory," an arbitrary juxtaposition, in which the warring elements do not and cannot coalesce so as to acquire a renewed vitality? Indeed, throughout, one cannot help feeling that Sir Joshua is schooling himself into this admiration of the Bolognese School, so universal in his time, and that it is not the artist but the generalising theorist who is attracted by this phase of Italian art—who thinks himself compelled by reason to admire, where the painter, genuinely awed though he undoubtedly is by the superhuman majesty of Michelangelo, is naturally drawn towards Venice, towards Antwerp, towards Amsterdam.

In the Third Discourse, Sir Joshua applies himself to define the "great style," and to point out how the perfect ideal of beauty is to be evolved by a process of selection, by an elimination from the beautiful forms of nature of the accidental blemishes which obscure them. Going beyond the process by which the Greeks, starting on a basis of realism and never departing from natural truth, attained to their genuine ideality, the master—the theorist again dominating the artist—proceeds to set up the following canon, the following invariable law of beauty :—

"Though the most perfect forms of each of the general divisions of the human figure are ideal, and superior to any individual form of that class, yet the highest perfection of the human figure is not to be found in any one of them. It is not in the Hercules, nor in the Gladiator, nor in the Apollo, but in that form which is taken from them all, which partakes equally of the activity of the Gladiator, of the delicacy of the Apollo, and of the muscular strength of the Hercules. For perfect beauty in any species must combine all the characters which are beautiful in that species. It cannot consist of any one to the exclusion of the rest : no one, therefore, must be predominant, that no one may be deficient."

But is this not reducing beauty in the human form to a cold, meaningless abstraction, almost to a mathematical combination? Is it not eliminating not only the accidental blemishes which obscure the type in the imperfect individual, but also the inherent character, which is of the essence not less of the type than of the individual ; without which art, as the exponent, the interpreter of nature to the eyes which unaided would fail to take in her comprehensiveness, can have no existence. Diametrically opposed to such a theory is the practice of the

Greeks in the most representative works which have come down to us:—in the "Theseus (Olympos?)" and the "Cephisos" of the Parthenon, in the "Hermes" of Praxiteles, in the "Demeter" of Cnidos; and, hardly less contrary to it, the practice of Michelangelo. Luckily, too, Reynolds himself had neither the power nor the inclination to put so negative a theory into practice.

In the Fourth Discourse, the President proceeds to develop his ideas on the grand style, as applied to invention, to composition, to expression, and even to colouring and drapery. In some passages of this lecture, we seem to hear not Reynolds but the rhetorical, the ultra-classic David himself. So persistent is the elimination of the particular, the exclusion of the "vulgarism of ordinary life in any country," the limitation of the choice of subject to "instances of heroic action or heroic sufferings," or, "the capital subjects of Scripture history." Here again is continued the *plaidoyer*, so strange as coming from our master, in favour of the Roman, the Florentine, the Bolognese Schools—"the three great schools of the world in the epic style,"—after these being made to rank, in a lower category, the Venetian, the Flemish and Dutch Schools, "all professing to depart from the great purposes of painting and catching at applause by inferior qualities." This deliberate depreciation of Venetian art, in favour of what may be termed the more Academic schools, may, perhaps, to a certain extent be explained and excused as coming from the head of an Academy addressing its students. Not so the apparent misapprehension of the scope and intention of the great Venetian art, contained in such sentences as the following:—

"Tintoret, Paul Veronese, and others of the Venetian school, seem to have painted with no other purpose than

to be admired for their skill and expertness in the mechanism of painting, and to make a parade of that art which, as I before observed, the high style still requires its followers to conceal."

It is difficult to believe that, under any conceivable circumstances, the following astonishing sentence can ever have represented Sir Joshua's true views with regard to Venetian colouring :—

"Even in colouring, if we compare the quietness and chastity of the Bolognese pencil to the bustle and tumult that fills every part of a Venetian picture, without the least attempt to interest the passions, their boasted art will appear a mere struggle without effect: *a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.*"

It is only fair to our master to point out that, in a subsequent section of the same Discourse, he thus exempts from his sweeping censure the works of Titian :—

"Though his style is not so pure as that of many others of the Italian schools, yet there is a sort of senatorial dignity about him which, however awkward in his imitators, seems to become him exceedingly. His portraits alone, from the nobleness and simplicity of character which he always gave them, will entitle him to the greatest respect, as he undoubtedly stands in the first rank in this branch of the art."

He sums up with the conclusion—a fatally erroneous and destructive one, as we deem it—that there must necessarily exist two distinct styles in history-painting: the grand, and the splendid or ornamental. It is against

such a conclusion, as extended to art generally, that the whole life-work of Mr Ruskin has been directed, and if he had done nothing beyond contributing to overthrow it, the English-speaking world would owe him a debt of gratitude, the magnitude of which it would be difficult to exaggerate.

In the Fifth Discourse the President strives to mitigate to a certain extent the extreme rigour of the conclusions arrived at in the preceding one. He opines, "that the ornamental style which, in my Discourse of last year, I cautioned you against, considering it as a *principal*, may not be wholly unworthy the attention even of those who aim at the grand style, when it is properly placed and properly reduced." Sir Joshua's paragon, Ludovico Caracci, is put forward once more—this time as mitigating the severity of the great with the graces of the ornamental style.

Into the disquisition on the genius of Michelangelo and Raphael, and the main points of contrast between the two, it is impossible here to enter, interesting as it is. Sir Joshua goes evidently too far in attributing to his fetish even the existence of Raphael; but few, even among the most ardent worshippers of the divine Urbinate, will object to the following conclusion :—

"His genius, however formed to blaze and to shine, might, like fire in combustible matter, for ever have lain dormant, if it had not caught a spark by its contact with Michael Angelo; and though it never burst out with *his* extraordinary heat and vehemence, yet it must be acknowledged to be a more pure, regular, and chaste flame."

The subject of the Sixth Discourse is, as the President himself states, *Imitation;* and here he takes and defends,

with singular ability and good sense, the position that the painter must, of necessity, be an imitator, not only of the works of nature, but of those of other painters.

"Invention," he says, "is one of the great marks of genius; but if we consult experience, we shall find that it is by being conversant with the inventions of others that we learn to invent; as by reading the thoughts of others we learn to think."

He goes on to point out that imitation ought not to be confined to any one great master—be he Raphael himself—but should be enlarged so as to include all worthy of the name.

Such imitation as he advocates must not, however, be accepted as extending to an imitation of mannerisms and defects—in which sense it results in the deplorable school left behind by Michelangelo; or an artificial grouping together of perfections difficult to reconcile the one with the other—in which case it becomes the frigid eclecticism of the Carracci, so persistently put forward as an example by our master. The imitation should address itself, as Reynolds himself points out, even more to the methods and standpoint of the great masters in approaching and interpreting nature, than to their individual works. Yet, experience teaches that there is hardly a great artist but who, in his beginnings, has been grafted on, has sprung from, another great artist; and to enumerate instances would but be to give the greatest names in art, and not only in so-called fine-art, but pre-eminently in music: for nothing can come of nothing!

Of peculiar interest is that section of the Discourse which deals with imitation of another kind, with the bor-

rowing of a particular thought, an action, attitude, or figure, and the transplanting of it into your own work; since this process has often been performed with rare felicity by Sir Joshua himself, and his defence is the more able and convincing for being a personal one. He lays it down that :—

"He who borrows an idea from an antient, or even from a modern artist, not his contemporary, and so accomodates it to his own work that it makes a part of it, with no seam or joining appearing, can hardly be charged with plagiarism. . . . Borrowing or stealing, with such art and caution, will have a right to the same lenity as was used by the Lacedæmonians, who did not punish theft, but the want of artifice to conceal it."

How much truer is the following of the Italian artists of to-day than it could have been even of those of Sir Joshua's time :—

"It is difficult to conceive how the present Italian painters, who live in the midst of the treasures of art, should be contented with their own style. They proceed in their common-place inventions, and never think it worth while to visit the works of those great artists with which they are surrounded."

In the Seventh Discourse, Sir Joshua's chief theme is Genius and Taste, and he strives to demonstrate that those who are to judge of the merit and defects of art must have settled principles by which to regulate their decisions, and must not let these be determined by unguided fancy. He proceeds to lay down that the general terms beauty and nature, and the conceptions

attaching to them—in which he includes not only outward form but the nature, internal fabric, and organisation of the human mind and imagination -- are but different modes of expressing the same thing. In other words, he holds that the general, the ideal, which is nature with the individual eliminated, should alone be called nature, and that the individual has no right to the name. It is evidently by reasoning *a priori* on these "settled principles—" by assuming that they are, or should be, those proper to all mankind, and by neglecting or disdaining to place himself at the true standpoint of those whom he assumes to judge—that Sir Joshua arrives in perfect good faith at the judgments on art and artists which have already been noted as so strangely at variance with his own artistic temperament and practice. His position is very clearly stated thus in the peroration to the Discourse :—

"It has been the main scope and principal end of this Discourse to demonstrate the reality of a standard in taste, as well as in corporeal beauty; that a false or depraved taste is a thing as well known, as easily discovered, as anything that is deformed, misshapen, or wrong in our form or outward make; and that this knowledge is derived from the uniformity of sentiments among mankind, from whence proceeds the knowledge of what are the general habits of nature; the result of which is an idea of perfect beauty."

In the Eighth Discourse, the argument is of simplicity, repose, and unity in art, and their contraries; of moderation in ornament, and the degree, varying according to the professed style of the work, to which this is admissible. Pointing out that simplicity, when so very inartificial as

to seem to evade the difficulties of art, is a very suspicious virtue, Sir Joshua goes on to say, speaking most forcibly of a defect from which he must know himself, as a man of his time, not wholly exempt :—

"I do not, however, wish to degrade simplicity from the high estimation in which it has been ever justly held. It is our barrier against that great enemy to truth and nature, Affectation, which is ever clinging to the pencil, and ready to drop in and poison everything it touches."

The lecture contains yet another interesting *pentimento* of Sir Joshua's, with reference to his too absolute pronouncements in previous Discourses on the subject of the "sublime" and the "ornamental" styles in painting :—

"I thought it necessary, in a former Discourse, speaking of the difference of the sublime and ornamental style of painting—in order to excite your attention to the more manly, noble, and dignified manner, to leave, perhaps, an impression too contemptuous of those ornamental parts of our Art for which many have valued themselves, and many works are much valued and esteemed.

"I said then, what I thought it was right at that time to say : I supposed the disposition of young men more inclinable to splendid negligence than perseverance in laborious application to acquire correctness ; and therefore did as we do in making what is crooked straight, by bending it the contrary way, in order that it may remain straight at last.

"For this purpose, then, and to correct excess or neglect of any kind, we may here add, that it is not enough that a work be learned—it must be pleasing : the painter must add grace to strength, if he desires to secure the first im-

pression in his favour. Our taste has a kind of sensuality about it, as well as a love of the sublime; both these qualities of the mind are to have their proper consequence, as far as they do not counteract each other; for that is the grand error which much care ought to be taken to avoid."

The Ninth Discourse, delivered at the opening of the new buildings of the Academy at Somerset House, is a short harangue, *de circonstance*, in which the President uses the well-rounded and rather insipid periods of the Johnsonian manner to express his beloved large generalisations, and seeks overmuch to confuse the boundaries of art and morals. In the peroration we hear the disciple of the mighty lexicographer, rather than the true Sir Joshua, treating art as mainly a discipline apt to raise the thoughts and extend the views of the beholder; and more than ever does the moralist appear to usurp the place of the artist and the æsthetician when, in his concluding sentence, he rises in an artificial *crescendo* from Taste to Virtue.

The Tenth Discourse deals with Sculpture, a branch of art with which Sir Joshua had but a superficial acquaintance, and it is, accordingly, the weakest of the series. The finest treasures of Greek sculpture were either unfamiliar to the student of that day, or had not yet been unearthed. Classical art then meant either the rhetorical passion and the studied graces of the later Greek schools, or the frozen conventionalities of the Græco-Roman style. That the great schools of the Middle Ages and the unique Italian art of the *Quattrocento* were alike ignored or misapprehended by our master results pretty clearly from the already quoted statement that "the Roman, Lombard, Florentine, Venetian, and Flemish schools (of

painting) all pursue the same end by different means; but sculpture, having but one style, can only to one style of painting have any relation; and to this (which is, indeed, the highest and most dignified that painting can boast) it has a relation so close, that it may be said to be almost the same art operating upon different materials." We could not expect that Sir Joshua should be wiser than his generation on the still much-debated subject of polychromy in sculpture, and it is accordingly without surprise that we find him speaking with undisguised contempt of this adjunct to the statuary's art. He is inevitably ignorant of the fact that it has been a more or less important factor in all the greatest and most representative style: in the Assyrian, no less than the Egyptian; in the noblest phases of the Greek; in the noblest phases of the Gothic; in the earlier and finer stages of the Renaissance.

This is well put, and indisputably true:—

"Imitation is the means, and not the end, of art; it is employed by the sculptor as the language by which his ideas are presented to the mind of the spectator. Poetry and elocution of every sort make use of signs, but those signs are arbitrary and conventional. The sculptor employs the representation of the thing itself; but still, as a means to a higher end, as a gradual ascent, always advancing towards faultless form and perfect beauty."

But it is not without astonishment that we come upon the following from Michelangelo's devoutest, if not on all occasions most discerning, worshipper:—

"As a proof of the high value we set on the mere excellence of form, we may produce the greatest part of the works of Michael Angelo, both in painting and sculp-

ture, as well as most of the antique statues, which are justly esteemed in a very high degree, though no very marked or striking character or expression of any kind is represented."

Surely, overpowering in their physical strength and majesty as are the creations of the terrible Florentine, the outward form in them—even more entirely than in the works of any other artist—is but the symbol of the conception in its intellectual and emotional aspects; and, through it, of the vast sombre personality of the poet-painter himself, self-sustained without effort at heights where the spirit cannot even in contemplation follow, without a dismayed sense of its feebleness.

Thoroughly in accordance with the canons and practice of the finest Greek art is, on the other hand, the precept that, "as the general figure presents itself in a more conspicuous manner than the features, it is there we must principally look for expression or character—*patuit in corpore vultus.*" . . . . It is the failure to appreciate the aim of classical, and especially of Greek, art in this respect, that causes some to look upon it—Sir Joshua himself does so occasionally—as monotonous and expressionless.

In the Eleventh Discourse our master applies himself to defining the genius of the plastic artist, which he somewhat awkwardly, yet truly, sums up as "the genius of mechanical performance." We take his meaning to be, that the power of giving plastic form and complete outward expression to the vision of the artist is an inherent and principal part of genius. Is it not, indeed, this power of complete and personal expression which serves to distinguish genius—whether that of the poet or the painter—from the hazy and imperfect vision of lesser mortals? It is surely, however, a half-truth—that is very nearly a fallacy—to say

that the power which enables the artist to conceive his subject with dignity may be said to belong to general education; for the true vision of the artist is not as that of the poet. Manifestly, on the other hand, "Whatever sublime ideas may fill his mind, he is a painter only as he can put in practice what he knows, and communicate those ideas by visible representation."

More and more, as Sir Joshua goes on, do we find him receding from the standpoint so arbitrarily taken up in the earlier lectures with regard to Venetian art, and seeking to qualify the position therein assumed. Titian he had always more or less exempted from his strictures; and now he says: "Raffaelle and Titian are two names which stand the highest in our art; one for drawing, the other for painting." On the latter he lavishes praise at once splendid and discerning, deeming, perhaps, that the time has come when the students may be safely allowed to come within the circle of his magic influence. "What was said of Virgil, that he threw even the dung about the ground with an air of dignity, may be applied to Titian; whatever he touched, however naturally mean and habitually familiar, by a kind of magic he invested with grandeur and importance." And again, in paralleling the technical styles of Raphael and Titian: "But if he (Raphael) had expressed his ideas with the facility and eloquence, as it may be called, of Titian, his works would certainly not have been less excellent; and that praise, which age and nations have poured out upon him, for possessing genius in the higher attainments of art, would have been extended to them all."

Sir Joshua winds up this lecture with a warning against misdirected labour, as employed upon unessential and distracting detail:—"There is nothing in our art," he says, "which enforces such continual exertion and

circumspection as an attention to the general effect of the whole. It requires much study and much practice; it requires the painter's entire mind."

In the Twelfth Discourse the chief theme is the method of study to be pursued by the young students who intend to spend—as did the painter himself, and most of his contemporaries—some years in Italy. He mainly addresses those who, after their *Lehrjahre* at the Academy, are about to start upon their *Wanderjahre* in the golden land which then exercised an irresistible fascination over artistic youth. From the earlier Discourses we might have imagined that a course of strenuous study of the Roman, Florentine, and Bolognese schools would be imperatively laid down. But no; the practical artist, and not the theorist on stilts, here speaks forth, and expresses the wish that the student on going abroad should employ himself upon whatever subject he may have been drawn to by a genuine impulse, rather than that he should go sluggishly about a prescribed task. The President's monitions are directed against the tendency to lean unduly on the teaching, as apart from the example, of other men; and he then proceeds to inveigh against the fatal facility of the *Pittori improvisatori*, with their conceptions only remotely established on the solid basis of nature. With their method he contrasts that of Raphael, borrowing from Masaccio, in the Brancacci Chapel (really—in the instance cited by Reynolds of the figure of St Paul—from Filippino Lippi painting afterwards in the same chapel). This subject of the borrowing by great master from great master is one upon which, as touching himself, Reynolds dwells with singular insistence, and he must, it is maintained, be held to have taken the bold and the true view of a question which must always be surrounded with great difficulty. Raphael's

wealth, he holds was so great that he might borrow where he pleased without loss of credit; while, on the other hand, "those who steal from mere poverty—who, having nothing of their own, cannot exist a minute without making such depredations; who are so poor that they have no place in which they can even deposit what they have taken: to men of this description nothing can be said. . . . Men of superior talents alone" he goes on to assert "are capable of thus using and adapting other men's minds to their own purposes, or are able to make out and finish what was only in the original a hint or imperfect conception. A readiness in taking such hints, which escape the dull and ignorant, makes, in my opinion, no inconsiderable part of that faculty of the mind which is called genius."

In the Thirteenth Discourse Sir Joshua addresses himself to a discussion of criticism, and points out that, to enlarge the boundaries of the art of painting, as well as to fix its principles, it becomes necessary that that art and those principles should be considered in their correspondence with the principles of other arts which, like this, address themselves primarily and principally to the imagination. Here it is interesting to find the master—in this almost alone among practising painters—having the clear-sightedness to perceive and the courage to state that: "Perhaps the most perfect criticism requires habits of speculation and abstraction not very consistent with the employment which ought to occupy, and the habits of mind which ought to prevail in, a practical artist."

He recognises, notwithstanding his *a priori* theories, a kind of sagacity, in art as in life, which does not wait for the slow process of deduction, but goes at once, by what appears a kind of intuition, to the conclusion. Arguing, as it were, against himself and the arbitrary nature of his generalisations in some of the former Dis-

courses, he lays down the importance of impressions which are the result of the accumulated experience of a whole life, and warns his hearers against "an unfounded distrust of the imagination and feeling, in favour of narrow, partial, confined, argumentative theories."

Proceeding on the basis of a parallel between Painting and Poetry — such as, however, must obviously be, to a great extent, fallacious — our master goes on to argue against the necessity for servile imitation in either art. In the sense that mere mirror-like reproduction of nature, of *la chose vue*, is neither necessary, nor, indeed, possible, none will now, it is imagined, be found to gainsay him. But when he lays down that whatever is familiar, or in any way reminds us of what we see and hear every day, perhaps does not belong to the higher provinces of art, either in poetry or painting; that "the mind is to be transported, as Shakespeare expresses it, *beyond the ignorant present*, to ages past"; then we must part company with him. Such a fencing in, such a narrowing of the "higher provinces of art," would leave outside these some of the greatest, some of the most genuinely ideal work that man has brought forth. What is the incomparable Panathenaic frieze of the Parthenon but a generalised and idealised, yet an unfalsified, version of what was absolutely familiar to all Athenians of the age of Pericles? What, to take a modern instance, are the noble and, in the truest sense of the word, ideal pastorals of Jean-François Millet but generalisations of the most characteristic and most essential elements in the life with which we are all familiar; and yet, where are we to place them, if not within the "higher provinces of art"?

To constitute art, "ideal," "great," or "high"—as we may choose to call it—is it, indeed, indispensable that

"another and a higher order of beings be supposed, and that to those beings everything introduced into the work must correspond"? Is it not sufficient that the truth—be it that of to-day or of another day—be presented in its largest and most synthetic form, stripped of the accidental elements which obscure its essence, but still firmly based on, and rooted in, that nature from which only a false imagination, a trivial fancy, strives to escape—in the vain hope of replacing it by some rootless, unsubstantial thing of its own?

The Fourteenth Discourse is wholly taken up with the interesting exposition of the art of Gainsborough which has been summarily dealt with in a previous section. It is just the well-balanced, judicious, perfectly fair tribute to the memory of a great rival that might have been expected from Reynolds. He is nothing moved by the marked ungraciousness shown by that rival during his lifetime, but he is little moved, either, by the pathos of the death-bed repentance and reconciliation. Just in so far as the panegyric, thoroughly fair and judicial as it is, lacks the glow of enthusiasm which a still higher generosity might have communicated to it, does it fall short of perfect felicity and perfect discernment in praise.

The Fifteenth and last Discourse is avowedly a retrospect, a summing up of what has gone before, and a kind of defence and reiteration of the theories advanced, of the opinions enunciated, in the previous Discourses. It derives an added significance from the fact that the master clearly knows himself within sight of the ultimate limit, not only of his artistic but of his human career. It is necessary to bear in mind, in perusing the sentences in which the President, usually so mild, so averse from self-assertion, appears a little to step out of his usual character, that he has recently emerged victorious, yet not

completely restored to his proverbial equanimity, from his contest for supremacy with the hostile majority of the Academy. The following is in curious contrast to a previously-quoted sentence, with regard to the inherent want of fitness of the artistic temperament to deal with questions of criticism requiring habits of speculation and abstraction :—

"To develop the latent excellencies, and draw out the interior principles, of our art, requires more skill and practice in writing than is likely to be possessed by a man perpetually occupied in the use of the pencil and the palette."

. . . . . .

"But still, such difficulties ought not to deter artists who are not prevented by other engagements from putting their thoughts in order as well as they can, and from giving to the public the result of their experience. The knowledge which an artist has of his subject will more than compensate for any want of elegance in the manner of treating it, or even of perspicuity, which is still more essential; and I am convinced that one short essay, written by a painter will contribute more to advance the theory of our art than a thousand volumes such as we sometimes see. . . ."

The whole of the latter part of the final Discourse is taken up with the memorable panegyric of Michelangelo, to which, as an emphatic re-statement of the President's theoretical views—of his artistic religion, if not of his artistic practice, throughout his career—some reference has already been made.

Throughout the periods dealing with his favourite subject there is diffused a warmth of enthusiasm such

as rarely thrills either in the written or the spoken word of Sir Joshua. In the peroration we have not only an appropriate rhetorical climax, but the eloquent outburst of one who, with the certainty that his voice is to be heard no more in the place from which he speaks, raises it once again, with a passionate sincerity that none will question, in a final confession of faith.

It would be difficult to conclude these remarks on the master's labours in the field of philosophical and practical criticism more appropriately than by quoting the final paragraphs of the Twelfth Discourse, which contain the wholesomest, if, perhaps, not the most palatable, of his many valuable precepts :—

"Those artists who have quitted the service of nature, whose service, when well understood, is *perfect freedom*, and have put themselves under the direction of I know not what capricious, fantastical mistress, who fascinates and overpowers their whole mind, and from whose dominion there are no hopes of their being ever reclaimed, (since they appear perfectly satisfied, and not at all conscious of their forlorn situation), like the transformed followers of Comus,—

> 'Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,
> But boast themselves more comely than before.'

"Methinks such men, who have found out so short a path, have no reason to complain of the shortness of life, and the extent of art; since life is so much longer than is wanted for their improvement, or, indeed, is necessary for the accomplishment of their idea of perfection. On the contrary, he who recurs to nature, at every recurrence renews his strength. The rules of art he is never likely to forget; they are few and simple; but nature is refined,

subtle, and infinitely various, beyond the power and retention of memory; it is necessary, therefore, to have continual recourse to her. In this intercourse there is no end of his improvement; the longer he lives, the nearer he approaches to the true and perfect idea of art."

THE END.

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